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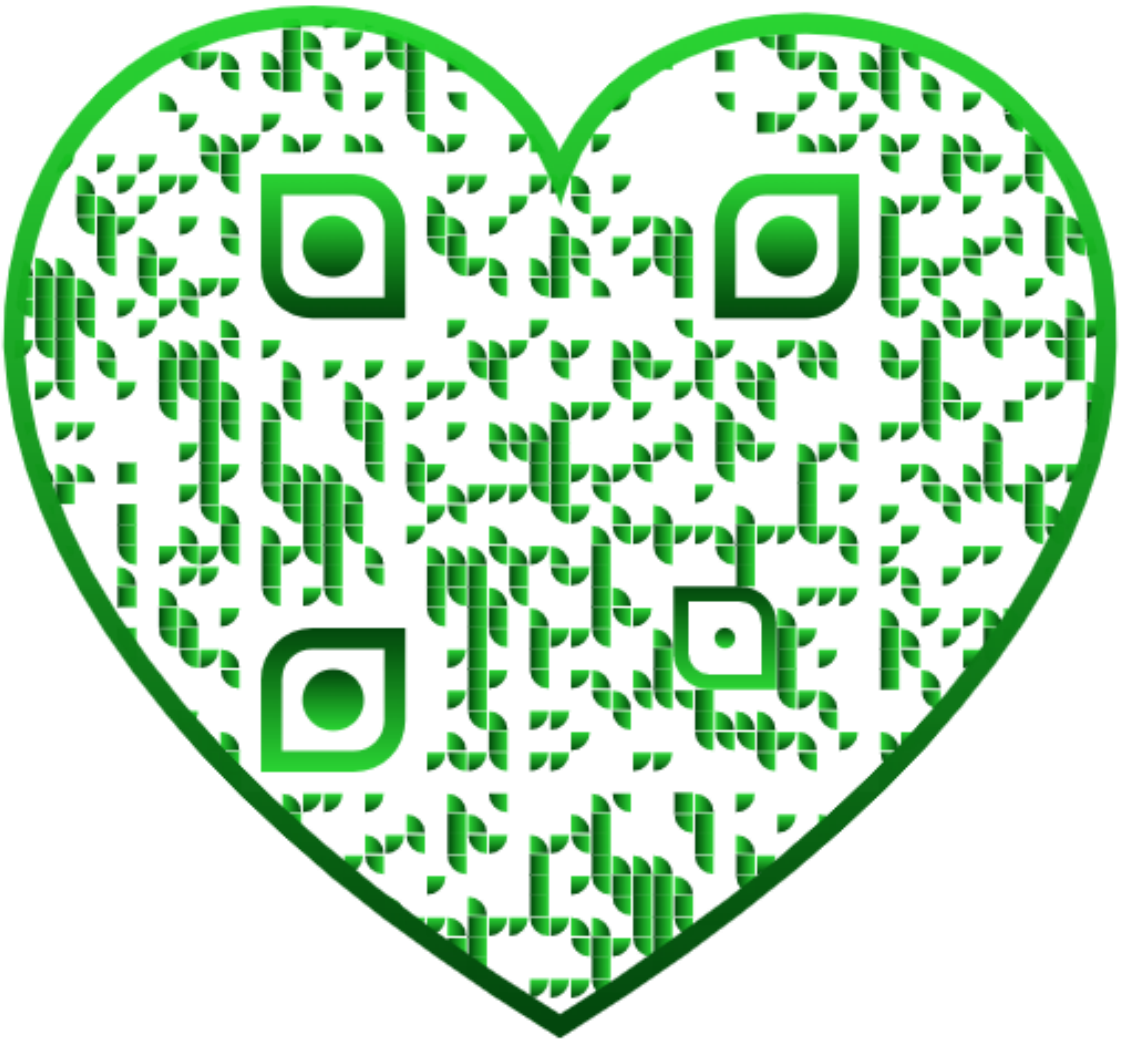

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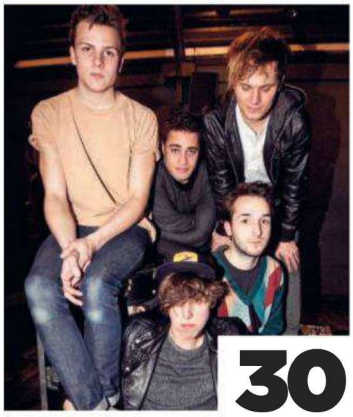

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"SHITTING YOURSELF? NOT GOOD"
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO NOEL GALLAGHER

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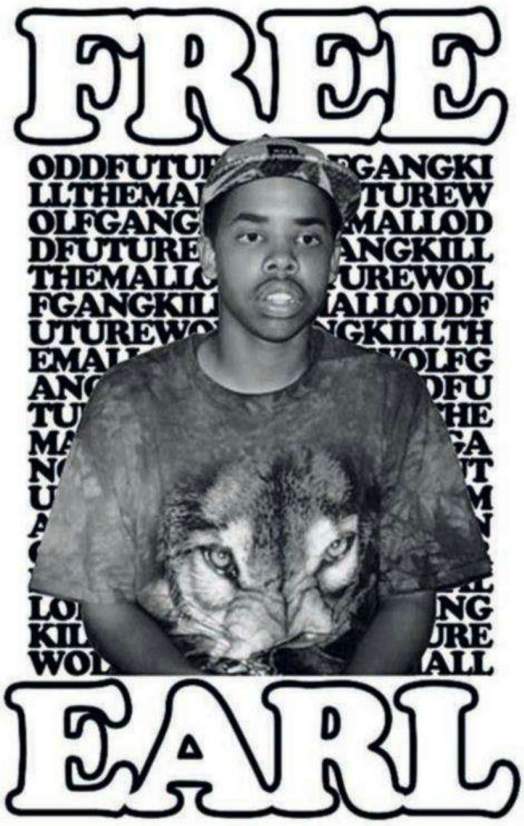
ON REPEAT

THE SOUNDS RATTLING ROUND THE SKULLS OF THE NME STAFF THIS WEEK



TRACK OF THE WEEK

EARL SWEATSHIRT

Home

"Sweatshirt Will Not Be On The Tape. Not Trolling Either," tweeted enfant terrible Tyler, The Creator last week (February 8) of Odd Future's forthcoming album, 'OF Tape Vol 2', suggesting that his mysterious best mate was still MIA. And then, a few hours later, Earl himself pops up on Twitter with the missive "home" – seemingly, he's been freed from his reputed stint at an all-boys' school in Samoa. So, back for good? And now he's returned to LA, will he be popping up on 'OF Tape Vol 2'?

We don't know. But judging by 'Home', Earl's standalone track that he posted online after amassing 50,000 Twitter followers in about an hour, he's not doing too shabbily without his old alma mater. If you were worried he might have picked up a few airs and graces from his posh boarding school, then fear not, because his fire hasn't been extinguished – instead, he tells us, he's "*switching up the moniker of artist and arsonist*", riding roughshod over an off-kilter beat with rhymes like: "*Self-loathing narcissist/Spittin' crowbars at the back windows of cars and shit*". And, like a man who just *knows* that we've all been waiting to hear from him for an absolute aeon – and, more crucially, whose next moves we can't wait to track – he's got the most nonchalantly perfect sign-off. "*Aannd I'm back*", he quips after just 90 seconds of sullen aggression. Welcome home.

Ben Hewitt, writer

> ***His fire hasn't gone out – he still rides roughshod over off-kilter beats***

GRAHAM COXON

Truth

It's destined to be overshadowed by some reunion dinner or other happening at The O2 next month, but nonetheless 'Truth', following Coxon's acoustic 2009 outing 'The Spinning Top' with stoner-rock guitars and hammer-on-sheet-metal drum pulse, suggests April's 'A&E' album is destined to be a far darker affair.

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

DEATH GRIPS

Blackjack

The most visceral rap ensemble of 2011 return with not one but two albums this year, the first of which has already spawned this effed-up slab of reverse vocals, thumping doom synths and all-round uneasy production. They may not be getting any more comfortable, but they are getting better and better...

Tim Chester, Deputy Editor, *NME.COM*

THE SHINS

September

Thanks to his dalliance with the mainstream, whenever a new James Mercer album rolls around nowadays we're all supposed to kneel at his feet as if he's the motherfucking messiah. He's not – but as this proves, he's still an ace songwriter, oozing Macca melodies and Beach Boys-y summer sheen. Which isn't exactly a bad thing, is it?

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

WILLIS EARL BEAL

Take Me Away

Chicagoan Beal, the multi-talented, multi-genred first signee to XL's new imprint Hot Charity, has declared his desire to be "the black Tom Waits". Sure enough, this righteously malevolent clamour, all hammer-and-tongs bellowing and clanking, straddles a raw, timeless space between Waits' 'Real Gone' and Lead Belly.

Emily Mackay, writer

BILL CALLAHAN

So Long, Marianne (Leonard Cohen cover)

On this cover, Billy C turns the lo-fi clang and muted timbre of the original into a warmly heroic celebration. Replete with pedal steel and a rare, bold optimism in Bill's low tones, it's a fitting tribute from one great artist to another.

Laura Snapes, Assistant Reviews Editor

DEERHUNTER

Curve

Expecting an even more accessible Deerhunter post-'Halcyon Digest'? Think again – 'Curve' is 10 mad steps backwards. Appearing on a Blonde Redhead-curated compilation to benefit the victims of last year's Japanese tsunami, this glacial instrumental proves Bradford Cox's mindset is as unpredictable as ever.

Rick Martin, News Editor

BRANDY AND MONICA

It All Belongs To Me

No-one had contemplated the potential genius of a 14-years-later sequel to B&M's genius squabble-jam 'The Boy Is Mine' until it was suggested. Yet despite um, groovy references to 'Facebook' and such, this neither a) picks up the story of the original song or b) pits the ladies against each other. Note to Stone Roses: this is not the gold comeback standard.

Dan Martin, writer

NICKI MINAJ

Marilyn Monroe

The tragic, babydoll Marilyn Monroe metaphor might feel hackneyed, but coming out of Nicki's mouth it's all sorts of shocking, and perhaps that's the point. Swirling, self-aware and bolstered with early-noughties Dallas Austin production, Nicki might have taken on yet *another* persona, but here, she's exposing herself.

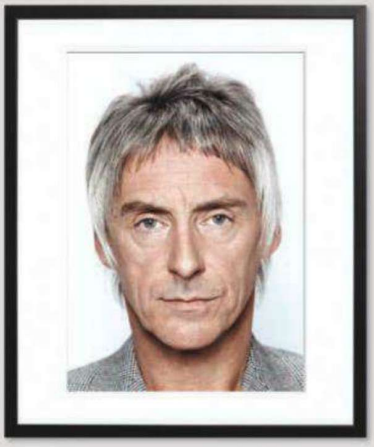
Priya Elan, Assistant Editor, *NME.COM*

VERONICA FALLS

My Heart Beats

Cold out there at the minute, innit? Props to VF, then, for recording this brand new song last week "on a freezing boat on the river Thames". Intended to celebrate the start of their tour, it's a tune that thaws through its chilly origins by being a tasty morsel of warm, breezy, unhateable fuzz-pop.

Hamish MacBain, Assistant Editor



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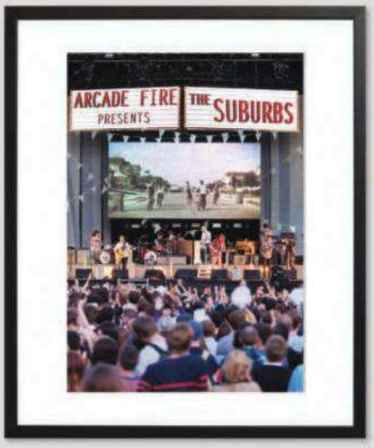

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UPFRONT

WHAT'S HAPPENED AND WHAT'S HAPPENING IN MUSIC THIS WEEK

Edited by Rick Martin

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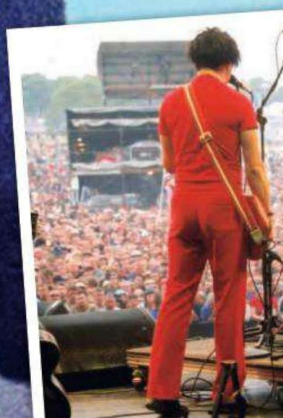


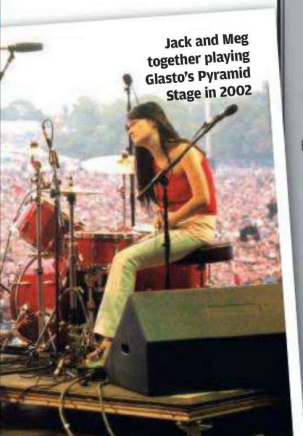
JACK WHITE WILL PLAY STRIPES SONGS AT UK LIVE RETURN

As details of Jack's solo return emerge, Radio 1's Hackney Weekend organiser reveals the guitarist won't be leaving the past behind

MAIN EVENT

Jack White may be looking to the future with his debut solo album 'Blunderbuss', but *NME* can reveal that he's also got a firm eye on the past – and will be playing White Stripes songs during what is currently scheduled to be his debut UK solo gig. According to Jason Carter, event director at BBC Radio 1's Hackney Weekend, the singer/guitarist has indicated his "40 to 50-minute" set at the June 23–24 event will comprise a mix of new and old material. "We've been told he'll be doing classic White Stripes songs during his set on the In New Music We Trust stage," Carter confirmed to *NME*. Since the Stripes' final gig in Mississippi in 2007, performances of Stripes songs have been rare (the last one was in a car park at SXSW last year at the opening of his Rolling Record Store) – so Carter's revelation is the strongest indicator so far that Jack's not ready to leave his former band behind just yet.

However, this is not the only piece of tantalising information to trickle out over the past two weeks, as we've been finding out...



Jack and Meg together playing Glasto's Pyramid Stage in 2002

SOLO STUFF'S BEEN PLANNED FOR A TIME

The decision to play White Stripes songs makes more sense when you consider Jack's comments to Zane Lowe on BBC Radio 1 shortly after announcing his return, where he revealed he always felt that he and Meg were actually "covering" his solo songs in The White Stripes. "I've put off making records under my own name for a long time but these songs feel like they could only be presented under my name," he said in the interview. "These songs were written from scratch, from my own expression, my own colours on my own canvas." To be taken less seriously, perhaps, are his claims that he only decided to hit the studio after a band cancelled their session at his Third Man Studios; the fact is that his tight-knit Third Man Records crew have known about his plans for a while and have done a pretty spectacular job of keeping it all under wraps.

ALISON MOSSHART SAYS IT'S "AWESOME"

Jack's return may have come as something of a surprise to fans, but to Alison Mosshart, his bandmate in The Dead Weather, there was a total air of inevitability. "You know what Jack's like, he always surprises," Alison tells *NME*. "He's a master at doing a lot more at the same time than everyone else." She's keen not to give too much away though – but is already clear on what fans should expect. "I can tell you this, it's going to be pretty full on," she declares. "The record sounds awesome."

Interestingly, Mosshart is refusing to rule out the possibility of The Dead Weather reconvening this year – but concedes that she'd have to complete her live commitments with The Kills before it could happen. "It's always on the table, we hang out as much as possible," she explains. "Don't forget, The Dead Weather came together accidentally. We were all done with touring, so it just fell into place and that's what was so exciting. I'm sure it'll happen again."

BUT THE RACONTEURS ARE ON HOLD

After playing their first live shows in two years last September, it appeared that Jack's band with Brendan Benson and The Greenhornes' Jack Lawrence and Patrick Keeler would be central to his 2012 plans. However, with Jack's announcement and Brendan's new solo album 'What Kind Of World' (out on April 23, the same day as 'Blunderbuss'), the band are firmly on the shelf. "I doubt we'll do anything for a while – I've got my record, and Jack's got his – and I don't even know what The Greenhornes are doing," Brendan tells *NME*. "It's all about timing – if there's time to do it, we'll do it." And as for his steer on how 'Blunderbuss' is progressing? "It's sounding incredible," he reveals.

THE ALBUM WILL FEEL COLLABORATIVE

Although Jack's keen that 'Blunderbuss' will see him strike out on his own, what was most stirring about his recent comeback single 'Love Interruption' was the cooing female voice in the background. It belongs to Ruby Amanfu, a Ghanaian-born, Nashville-based singer-songwriter with Grammy nominations and writing credits for er, Kelly Clarkson. With Jack also revealing 'Evil', his collaboration with Tom Jones last week, he's clearly not ready to go it totally alone *just* yet.

Ultimately, there are many more pieces of the puzzle to figure out. And, as ever with Jack, that's half the fun. But in a year of big musical returns, his renaissance is already looking ready to tower over all before it. Roll on April...

NME.COM *For the latest updates on Jack's solo return, and to view exclusive photos spanning his whole musical career, head to NME.COM now*

Should Jack be playing White Stripes songs again?

Fans answer via Facebook.com/NMEmagazine

"I don't see why he shouldn't – The White Stripes made him famous, so it'd be nice to acknowledge that." **ANDY BURNS**

"He should play some acoustic versions of classic Stripes songs – that would be cool." **JANE BLACK**

"Why not? I never saw Led Zeppelin live, so when Robert Plant played Led Zep tunes at his last gig here in Porto, I was thankful." **VIANA PIRES**

"He can expect a pretty miffed crowd if he doesn't." **GRAHAM WARD**

"If he doesn't and he just plays unheard new material, he may get booed for being too self-indulgent." **KOLONEL JAMIE KASPER**

"No! That band is half Meg's so it wouldn't be right." **RACHEL PRICE**

GORILLAZ' ALL-STAR COMEBACK

***James Murphy** lifts the lid on sessions with Damon and OutKast*

James Murphy has broken his post-LCD Soundsystem radio silence to proffer his talents on a new track. And the good news is he's got a couple of nifty stand-ins to feature – Andre 3000 and Damon Albarn and Gorillaz. The track, 'DoYaThing', is being released as a download by Converse through their 'Three Artists. One Song' project on Feb 23. So, how did the trio get on? "We're a 'man band'," James tells *NME*. Gorillaz' Murdoc was complimentary, adding: "Andre's lyrics are great, very fluid," with 'bandmate' 2D saying he's always been a fan of Murphy's "bloopy noises".

Damon Albarn is no stranger to a collaboration or two either. Plus, considering he's coaxed fine performances out of curmudgeons such as Mark E Smith and Lou Reed, it's not wholly surprising that working with him was a treat for all involved – even though we're talking about having three bona fide geniuses under one studio roof. You'd have thought tantrums aplenty would have been the norm, but according to James, there were no *Spinal Tap*-style histrionics. "Everybody was really respectful of each other," he explains. "We just tried to get out of each other's way."

Ah, bless, so perhaps this new fun and friendly foray into collaborations for James could mean he'll want to do some more work outside of LCD Soundsystem. "I've never done this before 'cos I felt it pulled energy from the band," he declares. "But I'm not cheating on them. It's not musical monogamy anymore."

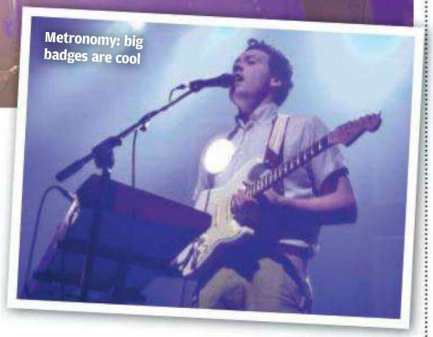
Hark those words – if the LCD divorce still has you feeling bitter, this collab proves there'll be plenty to get excited about in the future.

ANDY WILLSHER, PIETER M VAN HATTEM

NME AWARDS TOUR: THE CARNAGE BEGINS

Two Door Cinema Club*, *Metronomy*, *Tribes* and *Azealia Banks
get our annual four-band tear-up off to a spectacular start in Glasgow

Two Door Cinema Club: big screen and double doors just out of shot


Metronomy: big badges are cool

FRONT ROW

Crutches: they're becoming something of a tradition on the NME Awards Tour – last year Crystal Castles' Alice Glass hobbled onstage with a pair on the opening night, this year it's **Two Door Cinema Club**'s Kevin Baird needing the support. Thankfully, the bassist's ruptured tendon doesn't prevent the band putting on an awesome headlining show. "I can't think of anywhere better to begin this tour," singer Alex Trimble trills before 'What You Know', acknowledging that tonight is something of a homecoming given the Northern Irishmen have adopted Glasgow as their base. The band preview a trio of new songs – 'Handshake', 'This Is Moon' and 'Sleep Alone' – but, unsurprisingly, it's the likes of 'Undercover Martyn' and set-closer 'I Can Talk' that draw a raucous response from this most partisan of crowds.

Earlier, **Azealia Banks** kicks the night off in her own style. Accompanied only by her DJ and playing to an audience far larger than anything she's used to ("Oh my God, there are so many people here!" she exclaims), she doesn't seem overawed – she smashes it, winning over even the hardcore Two Door fans camped out by the barriers. Next there's **Tribes**. Something of an oddity on this tour in that they're its only real hearts-on-sleeves rock'n'roll band, their Camdenite-Springsteen strain of guitar anthemry goes down a treat, though they're eager to dispel the notion that they are this year's designated debauchers. "We're only half a day in!" protests frontman Johnny Lloyd backstage.

Meanwhile, after a triumphant second headliner slot that sees the likes of 'Radio Ladio' and 'The Look' go down a storm, **Metronomy** are already stirring up the tension backstage. "They're all cunts!" cackles Joe Mount when we ask him how he's getting on with his new tourmates, before hurriedly backtracking and insisting that, "No, we've bonded with Two Door Cinema Club over this hilarious horrorshow of a gig we played with them in Biarritz a couple of years ago. Azealia's really cool as well and Tribes seem really nice. But obviously, they're all cunts."

For now, we don't believe a word of it; give them another three weeks in each other's pockets and we're predicting Joe's sarcasm may come back to haunt him. Roll on the next three weeks of carnage.

Tribes go to war

Azealia Banks stole Elmo's coat

WHAT THE FANS THOUGHT

Who ruled the opening night?

BEN MCLEAN, GLASGOW

"Two Door were brilliant – 'Tourist History' is an awesome album, every song is a total anthem. Tribes were great, too."

AMELIA SULHUNT, EDINBURGH

"Azealia. She's never played here before, so I've been looking forward to this for ages. Will '212' be the anthem of the tour? Depends on how many TDCC fans she can win!"

HIYATO TAKAHASHI, JAPAN

"I loved Metronomy. Their sound is very current – it sounds like Sparks or ELO. It's got a kind of '80s electro-pop feel, but they play it with an attitude."

BECKY BEAUMONT, GLASGOW

"Two Door, no question. I love them. I even love Alex, which is why I made this sign (*holds up sign saying 'We Even Love The Ginger One'*). Someone stole it from us! It got passed right to the front!"

Two Door's NME office warm-up

Just before hopping on the tourbus, the boys came to our office for an exclusive live session and meet and greet with fans last week (February 6). Watch the footage now on *NMEVIDEO.COM*

WORDS: BARRY NICOLSON PHOTOS: TAKESHI SUGA, EMILIE E BAILEY

Speed Dial
SHAUN RYDER

Happy Mondays are back on tour – but their legendary hellraiser of a frontman says their wild, drug-fuelled days are over

So Shaun, the Mondays are back on the reunion gravy train – does that mean you'll be back on the chemical bandwagon too?

"Not a chance, dude! Come off it – I'm clean now. We were notorious for our partying when we were 20 years old! And 25. And 30. But excess doesn't even come into the equation now, it's not in our universe, mate. I get my highs from the shows. It ends when I come offstage."

Your reunion comes hot on the heels of The Stone Roses' – did their resurrection influence you?
"I can't deny they were a huge factor in all of this. When The Stone Roses reformation was announced last October, we got hit with a load of phone calls and emails about similar sorts of propositions for tours and one-off shows. But it's slightly different with us – the Roses had never been back together before, we've done it in 1999, 2000, 2004 and 2006 with various line-ups. We could have done it like that again, but this time we wanted to do it properly with the original line-up. Get the old boys back together."

You've reformed in plenty of time to support the Roses at Heaton Park this summer – are you interested in playing the gigs?
"I'm not saying we wouldn't do it if we were offered – if someone came up with us and the Roses, a big Madchester blowout, I wouldn't necessarily say 'no'. It could happen, you never know. But it certainly won't be at Heaton Park. We're doing the initial 11 shows and there might be a couple of festivals and gigs abroad. "

First the Roses, now the Mondays – who'll be the next Manchester band to reunite?
"Oasis isn't gonna happen for a while, I can tell you that much. I would like to see The Smiths reunite, but I can't see that happening – the word on the grapevine is Morrissey's not keen at all and neither's Johnny [Marr]. It'd be great if they did."

DAN DENNISON

Talking of patching things up, your fallouts with your bandmate and brother Paul Ryder were almost as legendary as your excess back in the day. How difficult was it to kiss and make up this time around?
"It was quite easy, actually. I hadn't even spoken to our Paul since 1999 – I'm 50, Paul's 18 months younger than me, so it was about time we both sorted things out. We'd forgotten what we were arguing about in the first place. Same deal with Paul Davis [keyboardist] and Mark Day [guitar] – except it was 19 years since I'd spoken to them. Fuck knows what we fell out over – I have actually forgotten."

So what's changed?
"We're all a lot older, more refined and friendlier gentlemen. We've not got the baggage that younger people would have, the egos aren't there. We're grown men now. Seeing everyone together again the other day, it was like we hadn't been apart for that long. Everyone's pretty much the same, except more grown up – now we're just a bunch of daft old blokes."

Was it easy to get Bez and Rowetta back onboard?
"At first I thought it was going to be dead simple to get Bez on board – but I was wrong. He just wasn't up for it. At nearly 50 years old, he was worried he was too old to be a freaky dancer. He's not slowed down physically – he can more than still cut it, trust me – but it was more of a mental thing. But eventually we brought him round to the idea – at the end of the day, the people who come to see us don't look too different to Bez anyway. And as for Rowetta, she's in better shape now than she's ever been. Good on you, girl!"

Can fans expect greatest hits sets from the gigs? Or entire album shows?
"We were offered a 'Pills 'N' Thrills And Bellyaches' gig a few years ago, but it didn't happen. We'll be doing some off 'Squirrel And G Man...', some off 'Bummed', some off 'Pills 'N' Thrills...', even a few off the 2007 album ['Unkle Dysfunctional']. All the hits you know and love, basically."

And what about new material? Are there plans for a new album?
"(*Suddenly agitated*) I keep being asked if we'll be doing another album, but there's absolutely no plans for that. I know the record company are gonna repackage and re-release 'Bummed' and 'Pills 'N' Thrills...', but there's no plans to do a Happy Mondays album. Look, I'm not saying there will never ever be another one, but certainly not now or in the next couple of years. I'm too tied up with TV commitments for that."

Speaking of which, how is your hunt for aliens going on your History Channel show, *Shaun Ryder On UFOs*?
"I've just filmed the English part, now I've got to go and do the American, Australian and South American bits of the show. It's keeping me busy. UFOs are fucking everywhere, mate – when they've seen you once, they keep an eye on you!"

So they'll be watching your reunion gigs?
"Definitely."

The Mondays are out, but who's in?

The runners and riders for The Stone Roses Heaton Park bill

BEADY EYE

Liam's certainly keen. So keen in fact, he'd even "sell hotdogs for them". "I'd fucking love to [support the Roses]", he told us back in November.

THE ENEMY

Singer Tom Clarke reckons they're not just in contention – they're on the shortlist. "I'd literally cut limbs off and sell them to get on the bill," he says. "I hope the Roses know that."

MILES KANE

Already the support lad of choice for the nation's arena bands, pairs of hands don't come much safer – or more keen to get stuck into the rider.

DIRTY NORTH

Namechecked in the Roses' reunion press conference by Reni, the Mancunian rap-rock outfit have presumably spent the past four months waiting for the phone to ring...

DYNAMO

The Roses are kings of the curveball – so it's not inconceivable that they could send Ian's magician mate out for some Madchester-style melon-twisting.

THE CRIBS: 'WE'VE GONE BACK TO OUR PUNK ROOTS'

Torture devices and old school influences – the trio reveal details of their first post-Marr album

"Well, I wanted to call it '24 Hour Rock Star Shit'," mock-moans Ryan Jarman down the phone from Wakefield. He's in his hometown sorting the artwork ("We've been buying a lot of flowers. It's going to be very floral") for The Cribs' post-Johnny Marr new album, which has ended up being called 'In The Belly Of The Brazen Bull' and comes out on May 7.

You should have heard the first portion cut from the bull in question, 'Chi-Town', earlier this week – if not, head to *NME.COM/artists/the-cribs* to listen. And while it may have been bassist/singer Gary Jarman who got his say for the album title, inspired by a pre-Christ Sicilian torture device (Gary: "I liked the 'b' alliteration..."), it's Ryan's song that has heralded the record's release. "When the band started I was trying to move to Chicago," he says by way of explanation of the track's title. "I was living with some artists – I'd never left Wakefield and I was having the time of my life. I went there because Bobby Conn [musician who produced The Cribs' first album] was based there, I had a girlfriend there, I lived with very liberated people." You mean you necked psychedelic drugs all day? "Er... a good time was had by all. It kind of bothered me that I didn't go through with my plan to stay. The Cribs got signed. But I've got a song about it now."

Indeed, the band are happy to look back to look forward. Gary describes the song as "like the Ramones and The Replacements – in the spirit of our first two records," while Ryan even says the phrase "old school" twice in relation to it. But with the album – produced by Dave Fridmann (The Flaming Lips, Mercury Rev), Steve Albini and the band themselves – now mastered and sat waiting for release, the feeling of completion is in some ways bittersweet. "I have that post-party depression!" exclaims Ryan. "But as soon as we put the lid on this album I started writing more songs anyway, then we went into a studio in Leeds and recorded more stuff. If you're writing you've just got to keep on going..."

The Cribs are so punk that they refuse to look at the camera

RICHARD JOHNSON, TOM MARTIN

THE COMEBACK DETAILS

The Jarmans' new attack plan in full

ALBUM TITLE: 'In The Belly Of The Brazen Bull'
RELEASE DATE: May 7
TRACKLISTING: 'Glitters Like Gold', 'Come On Be A No-One', 'Jaded Youth', 'Anna', 'Confident Men', 'Uptight', 'Chi-Town', 'Pure O', 'Back To The Bolthole', 'I Should Have Helped', 'Stalagmites', 'Like A Gift Fiver', 'Butterflies', 'Arena Rock Encore With Full Cast'
LIVE DATES: London ULU (Feb 28, NME Awards Show), Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (March 1), Leeds Metropolitan University (3), Nottingham Rock City (May 7), London Troxy (8), Bristol O2 Academy (9), Glasgow Barrowland (11), Manchester Academy (12), Eastbourne Winter Gardens (13)

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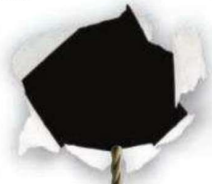
'CHI-TOWN' *The verdict*

NME reviews the first track from The Cribs' new album

WHEN THE CRIBS said they were going back to basics for their new album, we didn't realise they meant *this* far back. Produced by the lord of lo-fi rock, Steve Albini, the first taster from the band's fifth album sounds like it'd be most at home on their first or second. So thrillingly ramshackle it nearly falls apart at its gaffa-taped seams, 'Chi-Town' is all 'Blitzkrieg Bop' chords and primitive drums – a big-balled cousin to 2005's 'Mirror Kissers'. One of four Albini productions on the album, it's too soon to tell if the whole record will see them fully return to their lo-fi roots.



Either way, 'Chi-Town' maintains their position as Britain's punkiest indie brothers.

WIN TICKETS TO THE CRIBS' SOLD-OUT TOUR!

Hear the Jarman brothers' new songs first thanks to our exclusive NME Extra competition

Before The Cribs hit the road for their major May tour, they'll be previewing new album 'In The Belly Of The Brazen Bull' at three intimate shows, starting later this month. It'll be the first chance fans will get to hear tracks from the new album – but if you haven't bought your ticket yet, you're too late – it sold out weeks ago. However, fear not as NME Extra can still get you and a mate into one of the gigs. We've got a pair of tickets up for grabs for each of the gigs – which take place at London ULU on (February 28), Edinburgh Liquid Rooms (March 1) and Leeds Metropolitan University (3). To enter, simply follow the instructions below.

Good luck!

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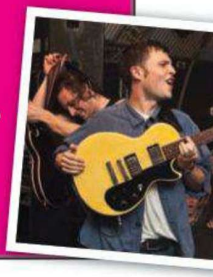
NME AWARDS 2012

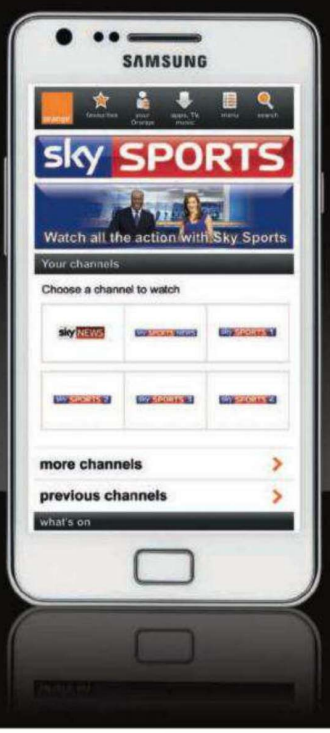
LAST CHANCE TO VOTE!

Plus, The Maccabees to play on the big night

TIME'S RUNNING OUT FOR you to have your say at this year's NME Awards – voting closes this Friday (Feb 17). Head to ***NME.COM/awards*** now to make sure your favourites pick up the hallowed middle finger gongs at the O2 Academy Brixton ceremony on February 29.

We can also reveal details of the latest addition to the night's live bill: The Maccabees. They join a line-up that already includes Godlike Genius Noel Gallagher, Pulp, The Vaccines and a one-off team-up between The Horrors and Florence.





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AT THE CASH-IN?

So punk they split as they were tasting hard-fought success, now legendary hardcore band ***At The Drive-In*** *are back and tell us they "don't care about the shit they were hung up on before"*

EXCLUSIVE REUNION INTERVIEW

"Time and money". That's how Omar Rodríguez-López rationalises his decision to reform At The Drive-In for two shows at this year's Coachella festival, an announcement last month that was arguably a bigger deal to music fans of a certain stripe than a month of Stone Roses reunions. "We're not getting any younger and there's been an offer of money every year," he says. "You can't avoid that. You'd be a fool and a politician to pretend that wasn't part of it." It's a startling revelation from a band who split (or, in their words, went on "indefinite hiatus") just as they were beginning to taste success in 2001 after an eight-year slog to widespread recognition. And one that certainly jars with the none-more-punk attitudes the El Paso post-hardcore band espoused first time around – principally about not selling out. This was a band who even attempted to ban moshing at their gigs lest their crowds become little more than "sheep".

"We've had offers to reform throughout our careers away from At The Drive-In," Omar reveals. "And every year, we've had this offer from Coachella to play there, but it just never felt right, timing-wise. But after enough time passes, you don't care about all the shit you were hung up on before. And obviously, it's gonna be weird. It's like getting back with your ex-wife, except in this case there are four ex-wives."

At The Drive-In, live in 2000 shortly before their "hiatus"

If ATD-I really are finally cashing in, at least they're not rushing into it. In fact, they've been secretly discussing their reunion for the best part of half a decade. "For a lot of people this seems to have come out of nowhere," Omar says. "But we've all been talking for the past four years. The guys came to my house in Mexico where we ironed out our differences, so we've been friends for a while now. It started when we got our masters back for [landmark third album] 'Relationship Of Command', and we all started talking about what we should do with them, how we wanted to put it out again. And then this offer of Coachella came up and so we said, 'OK, this feels right'."

Rehearsals are currently underway, but the band's plans beyond Coachella remain uncertain, with no other gigs – let alone a new album – set in stone. In fact, Omar's keen to stress that his and singer Cedric Bixler-Zavala's other band The Mars Volta – who release their new album next month [see right] – are still their focus. "A normal band in our situation – playing again after all these years, and all the hype that comes with that – would just go for it and play as many shows as possible. And that's not what we're doing. Right now, Coachella is all we're doing, and we'll see how it goes. We'll probably do a couple of other things, but it has to feel right." And pay a big enough wedge, presumably...

Mars barred?

Omar reveals why The Mars Volta's album has been delayed for three years...

IT'S BEEN SLIGHTLY overshadowed by the excitement surrounding the ATD-I reunion, but next month The Mars Volta will release their sixth album, 'Noctourniquet'. Omar actually completed work on the album three years ago, but reveals it was delayed at Cedric's request. "At the end of [last album] 'Octahedron' we got into a slight disagreement because he didn't want to keep up my pace of doing a record every year, and after 11 years of working together, I know when to back off."

Omar and Cedric: back in a jiffy

The LP is a return to the narrative structure of previous Volta efforts, with influences ranging from the Greek myth of Hyacinthus to the nursery rhyme of Solomon Grundy. Described by Cedric as "future-punk", its songs are shorter and more direct, with fewer extended improvs and a more electronic feel. "You start to go into new territories, so you have to explore them," says Omar. "I already had many years of exploring our old sound, but now it's time to move into the new."

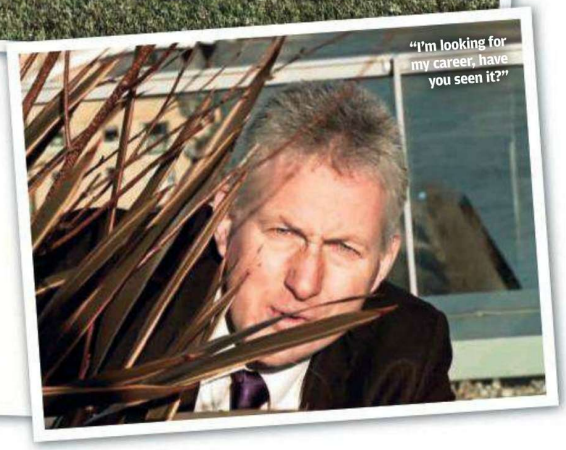
WORDS: BARRY NICOLSON PHOTOS: HAMISH BROWN, STEVE GULLICK

TALKING HEADS

MIXING POP AND POLITICS? LEMBIT OPIK HAS NAILED IT

Once famous for shagging a Cheeky Girl, the ex-MP's latest er, foray into the world of pop has put him firmly on the rock'n'roll map, reckons ***Hamish MacBain****. Listen up, Miliband and Cameron*

If, when you see the name Lembit Opik, the first thought that enters your head is "that weird politician chappie who used to be shagging one of the Cheeky Girls", then you need to catch up. Yes, he could still be referred to as such (minus the 'politician' bit, anyway – he lost his seat in Parliament at the last General Election). But as of last week he also became "the weird guy miming in some tiny indie band's video".



If you haven't watched it yet, please put down this magazine (after you've read it, of course!) and head over to *thegoodsuns.com* right now. The London four-piece, makers of jangly, bright indie-pop, describe the clip you will see as "our 'must-be-seen-to-be-believed' new video", which is fair. In it, Lembit lip-synchs along to their song 'Pop Wound', while dancing, pouting, saluting and playing air-harmonica (despite the absence on the track of any real harmonica). It's strange. Incredibly strange. But it will definitely – as the band hope – "get people listening to our music and laughing at a funny video". And more importantly, it sort of makes you warm to a man who once claimed £23,000 of public money in expenses. Since stepping down from the Lib Dems, our Lem has done loads of reality shows, and even some stand up. But neither has done for his public perception what this seemingly insignificant act is going to do. There's just something about making a tit of yourself in the video by a band no-one's ever heard of that says, 'He's alright'.

The urge to support Lembit becomes even stronger when you contrast his behaviour to something Ed Miliband coming out – in the same week – in support of Ministry Of Sound's 'Save Our Club' campaign, an act so unbearably ham-fisted in its attempts to align the Labour leader with "da yoot" that it merely reinforces all the stereotypes people have about politicians. It's even worse than David Cameron going on about how much he's into Band Of Horses. It's vaguely feasible that Dave does the dishes while 'No One's Gonna Love You' floats around the kitchen. But no-one, not even the most Roflcopter'd-up raver, is going to believe that Ed – new young face of the Labour party, remember – has even a passing interest in Ministry Of Sound or in club culture, let alone any concern about its future. His motives are transparent, and that grates. If you're young, you don't think, 'He's alright'. You think, 'Fuck off'. And 'Haven't you got better things to do?'.

> ***Nothing is more humanising than making an arse of yourself in public***

Politicians and musicians may long have been as seemingly uncomfortable bedfellows as... well, as one of the Cheeky Girls and Lembit Opik. Weirdly though, as it has turned out, it might just be that the latter has cracked it, and shown the way for Ed and others like him. It's quite simple. Don't go around saying you dig The Killers, because a) no-one will believe you, and b) even if they do, they will still think you're a dick. Instead, just get in there!

Nothing is more humanising than someone making a bit of an arse of themselves in public. And get in there with someone so off-kilter, and in such a bizarre way, that people are flummoxed and don't know what to make of it.

So many people in the public eye these days are worried about whether they're supposed to like whatever band or to hate them with a passion, that you will look – to quote an old punk maxim – like you don't give a fuck.

So come on Ed, take a leaf out of Lembit's book. Let's get you on guest guitar with Tribes at one of the NME Awards Tour gigs. Imagine! The older generation would just think it was something bands had to do these days to snare young voters – like "tweeting" – and therefore wouldn't really mind. Maybe you might get the odd couple of snide comments in Parliament the next day, but they wouldn't be from Dave (Cameron this is, not your brother), because he'd be too busy seething with jealousy that he and his team hadn't come up with your cunning plan. Meanwhile, all the kids will think you're alright after all, and vote for you come the election in 2015 – something that, frankly, is not going to happen just because you spend your time going on and on about how important it is that some nightclub that no-one apart from tourists has gone to for about 10 years stays open.

"WE SANG ABOUT FREEDOM – BUT NOTHING HAS CHANGED IN LIBYA"

On the first anniversary of the Libyan uprising, John Cantlie revisits rap rebels ***FB-17*** *– and discovers things aren't looking any better since he met them for NME back in September 2011...*

TEXT CHAT BETWEEN MOHAMMED, MY friend in Misrata, Libya and myself in a pub in Putney, London:
Me: Hey Mohammed. *Salaam alaykum*! How are you?
Mohammed: *Alaykum al salaam*. Fine. U?
Me: Yeah, all good. How are things in Misrata now?
Mohammed: Still weird, life not back to normal
Me: Yes, it will be strange after all this time fighting
Mohammed: Yep
Me: So now you have a holiday and take some time away from the guns?
Mohammed: Yes, I hope so, but it's so boring without guns!
Me: All Misrata guys love their Kalashnikovs, huh?
Mohammed: Yes

And there's the problem. Libyans' war for freedom from Gaddafi's regime may be won, but their war for unification is just beginning. During my initial interview in the country last September, hip-hop collective FB-17 spoke of their pride, jubilation and anger at what was happening in their country, sentiments mirrored in their lyrics. But it appears the brave new world they sung about hasn't emerged. Today in Libya there are few jobs and no money, army or police. Everybody wants to be in charge. Gangs of militias with guns are loose across the country, fighting each other for governance, disagreements, personal vendettas. "Either we deal with these violations or we split and there'll be civil war," warned the leader of the new government, Mustafa Abdul Jalil, last month.

The band aren't faring much better, either. Producer Covo was in a huge car crash that broke his left arm in December. "His brother was driving at 120mph," lead singer Mohamed 'Modee' Derraija tells us down the phone. "They were leaving a bad area when they lost control. There are problems between the people from Zlitan and Misrata now, they were getting away from there but rolled four times and hit a tree. The roof of the car was completely flattened and it's incredible they both came out alive."

"I've had to stop singing in the band," says Modee. "My family don't want me to sing. It's my uncle. He says I am bringing shame on the family by singing, that it's not what real Libyan men do. It's an Islamic thing, my family are too religious sometimes. I still write lyrics and help out with FB-17 stuff, but no more singing for me. It's really sad, I get depressed every time I think about it. It seems like everything has changed and yet nothing has changed."

Meanwhile Haq, the brooding vocalist, has left the band saying he's not comfortable performing in front of crowds. His family, too, were keen for him to stop.

"We sang about freedom," says Modee. "People loved us for it, but now we actually have it, everyone is returning to their old ways." Things happened so fast in Libya that everyone got caught up in the moment. Smashing Gaddafi, killing the 'Mad Dog' and all his regime stood for – that was a good thing, right? But now that moment has passed and Libyans are in charge of their own destiny. The trouble is, everyone wants to be in charge, and that doesn't work."

> ***"People still have their guns. There's no authority"***
> MODEE, FB-17

"The government is really slow," he continues. "They talk and talk but nothing happens. They don't make people hand their guns back – they have no authority – and meanwhile the money from oil doesn't come and the schools are in chaos. Without organisation from the top down things are going to stay like this for a long time. People want democracy tomorrow but it takes time."

This Friday (February 17) the Libyan revolution will be one year old. It's a date that's embedded in the minds of every Libyan, and from which FB-17, completed by singer Abdo and rapper Cenator, took their name. But right now Libya is looking into the abyss. They have all the problems of a post-disaster country with an untried and ineffective government that is making the whole thing up as it goes along. Both FB-17 and their countrymen now face some very tough decisions. The fight against Gaddafi brought the country together, unified them, but with that single goal now gone their victory is unravelling fast. The hardest part is yet to come.

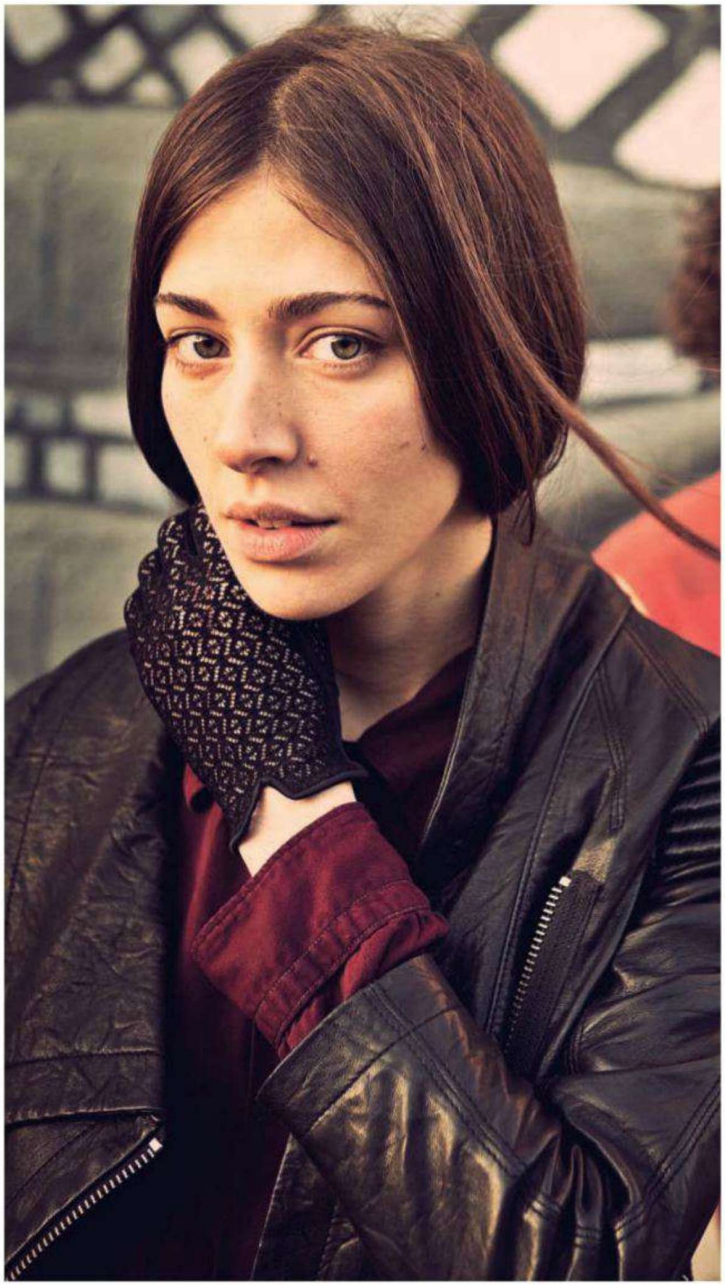
War of words (l-r): FB-17's Abdo, Covo, and Cenator

Libya's long road to freedom

- **SEPTEMBER 24, 2011** Huge assaults start in Sirte, the last stronghold of pro-Gaddafi forces, on the same day that the FB-17 interview ran in *NME*
- **OCTOBER 20** Gaddafi is found and killed in a drain south of Sirte
- **OCTOBER 31** Nato declares that its mission in Libya is finished
- **NOVEMBER 21** Saif Gaddafi, son of the dictator, is captured near the town of Obari; mystery surrounds as to why three of his fingers are missing
- **DECEMBER 17** US Defense Secretary expresses confidence in Libya's new government
- **JANUARY 13, 2012** Militias continue to fight outside Tripoli, with two people killed and over 40 wounded in one weekend
- **FEBRUARY 2** Rival militias battle in the beachside district of El-Saadi, Tripoli
- **FEBRUARY 8** Interim prime minister Abdel Rahim Al-Kib calls for support from Jordan in battling insurgents

Pieces Of Me
CAROLINE POLACHEK

The Chairlift frontwoman reveals how she's been inspired by classic Disney movies, Alanis Morissette's potty mouth and her own bandmate's skills with a paintbrush



PIETER M VAN HATTEM, ABSOLUTE FILM ARCHIVE, PATRICK WIMBERLY

My first album
'JAGGED LITTLE PILL' BY ALANIS MORISSETTE

"All the other girls in fifth grade had this album, so I knew it pretty much by heart before finally mustering up the nerve to ask for it for my 10th birthday. My mom was surprisingly cool with all the '*fuck*' and '*shit*' that she drops, and even let me play it on the home stereo. Thanks, mom!"

My first gig
WEEZER IN CONNECTICUT

"I didn't even know 'The Blue Album' very well, my friend David simply invited me and I went along. I remember not knowing who Buddy Holly was, but I liked Mary Tyler Moore and just assumed Buddy Holly was her boyfriend."

The first song I fell in love with
'A DAY IN THE LIFE' BY THE BEATLES

"My dad played 'Sgt Pepper's...' in the car for about six months straight when I was about eight or nine. I was amazed by how 'A Day In The Life' switched songs midway through. I was pretty ADD and spacey as a kid, so I related in particular to the lyric '*Somebody spoke and I went into a dream*'."

The first song I learnt to play
'A WHOLE NEW WORLD' FROM *ALADDIN*

"I must have been about seven years old, and had tinkered enough on our household piano to figure out how to imitate simple chord progressions by ear. 'A Whole New World' was the first one I could play from start to finish. Even today, the synths and vocals in Chairlift have the occasional nod to Disney. Howard Ashman and Alan Menken are totally genius."

My favourite lyric from a song
'A WHOLE NEW WORLD' FROM *ALADDIN*

"Got to be this track again, for the line: '*Tell me princess now when did you last let your heart decide*'. Or maybe the line, '*Soaring, tumbling, freewheeling*'. It's a wide vocabulary for little kids to hear!"

The book that changed me
***A REBOURS* BY JORIS-KARL HUYSMANS**

"This is the story of a guy who gives up on society and confines himself in an extravagant estate. There is a chapter where he lures a ventriloquist home so he can fuck her while she simulates Latin being spoken by two giant stone sphinxes. And others where he encrusts a tortoise with so many jewels that the poor thing can't walk anymore and dies. Dropping out is something that I always desire to do, but have never done properly."

My favourite painting

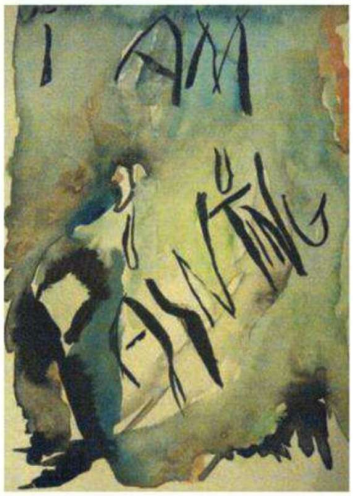
"Whatever [bandmate] Patrick's painted most recently. I like the one entitled *I Am Painting* by Patrick Wimberly."

Favourite film
MULHOLLAND DRIVE

"This was the first DVD I ever went out and bought – I only own about five. I've watched it 30 times. I love how uneven it is, how it's juicy and bleak at the same time, and how much of it goes unexplained. Real life is like that."

My favourite possession
MY CAMOUFLAGE JACKET

"I wear it everyday. It's a hunting jacket for shooting pheasants in the woods. I've never been hunting though! I'm a vegetarian."



Polachek it out: (from top) Patrick Wimberly's *I Am Painting*, erm, painting; Disney classic *Aladdin*; David Lynch's baffling 2001 movie *Mulholland Drive*; 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' by some obscure '60s group called The Beatles

VERSUS

PETER ROBINSON VS LAURA-MARY, BLOOD RED SHOES

One half of the Brighton duo on signing a billion album sleeves and why cheating is for, er, cheats

- Laura-Mary does not have a bunk bed
- "I'm scared I will fall off," reveals the indie chanteuse
- She would like to be known as The Queen Of Waffle

Hello, Laura-Mary Carter. We meet at last.
"Yes."

I feel like the last few years have all been leading up to this.
"Yes? Has it been exciting for you?"

I wouldn't say it's at the front of my mind. But it's a thought I sometimes have. Where are you?
"I'm in my room. I can see a desk... There are clothes all over the floor. It's pretty small."

You want to have a bit of a tidy. It'll seem bigger when it's tidy.
"That's true. But I'm a messy person."

What's under your bed?
"Let me have a look. (*Pause*) OK, there's a typewriter, and a printer."

It would be quite nice to have an older typewriter as an ornament, I think, but what does that say about a person? I have a feeling it might say 'What a twat'.
"It might do. It probably does. I only use it for our artwork. And that takes a lot of time. I'll be on the typewriter for hours because I've made a mistake."

Part of me thinks: great, it's that attention to detail you're well known for and makes you great. Another part of me thinks: there's a font for that, do it in Photoshop.
"But that's cheating. It's like having backing tracks. That's cheating as well."

But in the time you save you can work on better dance routines.
"(*Unconvinced*) Yeah... But if you're in a rock band you can't cheat, because that's cheating."

'Cheating is cheating', as the phrase goes.
"Yes."

You know you're doing this pre-order thing with your album where if you pre-order it you get a signed copy... Have you put a ceiling on it?
"I don't think so."

I had a chat with Maverick Sabre last week and he was sitting in a room with hundreds of sleeves waiting to be signed. And all I'm saying is, what happens if you get 300,000 people pre-ordering it? That's 300,000 autographs.
"Well then we'd be in a bit of trouble."

It might happen though!
"People would get angry if you didn't do it."

I'd be furious.
"We'd just have to do them until they were done."

If you had to sign the sleeves of all copies you sold, how many would you like your new album to sell?
"Erm... As many as possible. I'd definitely want to sell a lot of copies. A thousand?"

That's not many, you want your album to sell more than that.
"Yes, I want to sell a million thousand!"

A million thousand?
"A billion. Realistically, 100,000. No, make that 500,000."

How long does it take you to do an autograph?
"About three seconds."

So that's 20 in a minute, 60 in an hour... 24 of those in the day... So that's 115 days of solid signing.
"Do we get to sleep?"

No. OK then, let's divide it by two, so you're working 12-hour days. That's 230 days. I mean if you're only doing it Monday to Friday, you're doing it for a year.
"Well, if I can have weekends off then that's fine. We'd sign from 9am to 9pm, then we'd do a gig at 9.30."

So is that a deal?
"It is sort of not a deal because hopefully we will sell that without having to sign them."

THIS WEEK'S TOP 20

THE NME CHART

1	7	TRIBES	'WE WERE CHILDREN' *Island*
2	2	LANA DEL REY	'BORN TO DIE' *Polydor*
3	NEW	FOSTER THE PEOPLE	'DON'T STOP (COLOR ON THE WALLS)' *Columbia*
4	NEW	NIKI & THE DOVE	'DJ, EASE MY MIND' *Mercury*
5	12	KASABIAN	'GOODBYE KISS' *Columbia*
6	NEW	THE TING TINGS	'HANG IT UP' *Columbia*
7	6	BOMBAY BICYCLE CLUB	'HOW CAN YOU SWALLOW SO MUCH SLEEP?' *Island*
8	14	SPECTOR	'CHEVY THUNDER' *Luv Luv Luv*
9	10	NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS	'IF I HAD A GUN...' *Sour Mash*
10	4	ARCTIC MONKEYS	'BLACK TREACLE' *Domino*
11	16	THE MACCABEES	'PELICAN' *Fiction*
12	32	LADYHAWKE	'BLACK, WHITE & BLUE' *Island*
13	20	DRY THE RIVER	'THE CHAMBERS & THE VALVES' *RCA*
14	17	FOO FIGHTERS	'THESE DAYS' *Columbia*
15	19	GOTYE	'SOMEBODY THAT I USED TO KNOW' *Island*
16	9	THE BLACK KEYS	'LONELY BOY' *Warners*
17	1	THE SHINS	'SIMPLE SONG' *Coulmbia*
18	15	THE BLACK KEYS	'GOLD ON THE CEILING' *Warners*
19	5	THE BIG PINK	'HIT THE GROUND (SUPERMAN)' *4AD*
20	39	FIXERS	'IRON DEER DREAM' *Mercury*

NME RADIO

Hear the chart rundown first every Monday at 7pm on NME Radio
NME.COM/RADIO

NME.COM

Listen to the Top 40 and learn more about each artist online
7PM EVERY MONDAY AT NME.COM/CHART

NEW TO NME RADIO PLAYLIST

- THE HORRORS 'Changing The Rain'
- ALABAMA SHAKES 'Hold On'
- ZULU WINTER 'We Should Be Swimming'

The NME Chart is compiled each week by NME Radio and is based on how many times each track has been played on the station over the previous seven days.

EMILIE BAILEY

RADAR

FUTURE STARS, BREAKING SCENES, NEW SOUNDS...

Edited by Matt Wilkinson

Men at work (l-r): Rich Samis, Mark Perro, Nick Chiericozzi

GENE GLOVER

ABOUT TO BREAK

THE MEN

The New Yorkers twisting bad-ass noise-rock into sweet psychedelia

Brooklyn is band paradise. Dudes with guitars on the sidewalk, practice spaces on every block, gigs in bars and lofts and basements. Good vibes, man...

Fuck that. Brooklyn is nice but The Men know that a herd is a herd. "It's very easy to get caught up in different scenes, but you've got to live outside that, because it's a very ugly and short run that you can have, in that bubble," says singer-guitarist Mark Perro.

The Men – Mark, fellow singer-guitarist Nick Chiericozzi, bassist Ben Greenberg and drummer Rich Samis – lock into an older, gnarlier lineage: a continuum of repetitive, feedback-scorched rock'n'roll that stretches back through Spacemen 3 and Loop to the Ramones, The Stooges and MC5. Formed in 2008, they self-released a couple of albums before coming to the attention of Sacred Bones, the label behind the early Zola Jesus recordings. "I was really surprised they wanted to put out our record in the first place, because we don't really fit their aesthetic," says Nick. "They're on this darker, goth thing."

Last year's 'Leave Home', mind, is on some pretty heavy shit itself, boasting a blazing Spacemen 3 medley and improvised doom-metal track 'LADOCH', recorded in the basement of a Catholic school. Regardless, 'Leave Home' propelled The Men far outside the Brooklyn bubble – first, on a US tour with Milk Music, then out to Europe last December. Today, *NME* speaks to them from Finland, where they're in the middle of a European tour, playing venues far nicer than they're used to. They're also preparing a new record, 'Open Your Heart'. "This time, we wanted to pull the songs out from behind this shroud of distortion," says Mark, "to have nothing to hide behind."

Where 'Leave Home' was ugly and bad-ass, 'Open Your Heart' is celebratory and open to possibilities, with hints of '70s barroom rock and country snaking in around the feral lashings of feedback. "That seems to be a common response, that it's different," says Mark. "But you can't do the same thing twice."

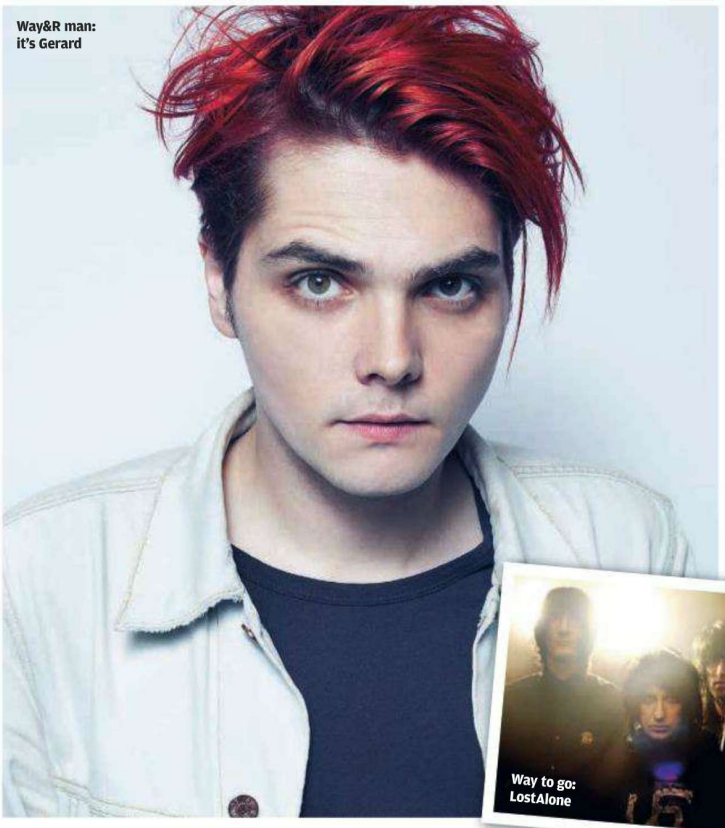
Well, many bands do.

"You could," he counters. "But what's the point in doing that?"

Louis Pattison

Need To Know

BASED: Brooklyn, New York
FOR FANS OF: Spacemen 3, Ramones
BUY IT NOW: 'Open Your Heart' is out on March 5
IN THE UK: A five-date UK tour kicks off in Brighton on February 23
ON NME.COM: Hear an exclusive stream of new album track 'Ex-Dreams'
BELIEVE IT OR NOT: New recruit bassist Ben Greenberg couldn't make the tour – or the *NME* photoshoot – due to "prior commitments"



Way&R man: it's Gerard

GERARD WAY TURNS TIPSTER

MCR mainman bigs up Derby three-piece LostAlone for saving him from 'personal struggle'

RADAR NEWS

We've all been there: smack bang in the middle of a 133-date, multi-million-pound world tour juggernaut when the shit hits the fan. For My Chemical Romance's Gerard Way, solace in the latter part of the band's uber-OTT 'Black Parade' tour came in the unlikely form of Derby trio LostAlone, whose music he says rescued him from the depths of despair and led to him taking on the role of executive producer on their March-bound 'I'm A UFO In This City' album.

Bigging up the band exclusively to *Radar*, Way said: "The first time I heard LostAlone was exactly when I needed them. We were neck-deep into the last six months of touring 'The Black Parade' and I was going through an emotional change and a personal struggle. It had been a long time since I heard something that spoke directly to my damaged and angry 16-year-old self, yet was just as enjoyable to my 30-year-old brain. I know every word to every song they've ever written."

> ***"They speak directly to my angry 16-year-old self"***
> GERARD WAY

But while the support of the MCR frontman is undoubtedly a gift, LostAlone's story hasn't all been plain sailing. Originally signed to Warner in 2009, it's taken them three long years to actually release '...UFO' due to various label wranglings and line-up changes, with singer Steven Battelle half-joking, "I'm convinced that the void could be turned into a degree course entitled Surviving Shark-Infested Waters. First module: Question Everything, Trust No-One..." Nevertheless, the band are now ready to roll, and start a mammoth 37-date UK tour this week.

Way, perhaps unsurprisingly, is utterly convinced by their potential to challenge his own band's crown as the ultimate major label rawk-fodder, declaring: "I have always thought of them as very much like us in that they are a group of fox-hole buddies, all alone, with nothing to directly compare them to. And because of this, they make music that no-one else can."

BAND CRUSH

Ladyhawke on her favourite new band

"There's this band from Auckland in New Zealand called She's So Rad, and they put out an album called 'In Circles' last year. They're just this guy and a girl, Jeremy Toy and Anji Sami, and it's really awesome. It's like Smashing Pumpkins when they do '1979', but also a bit like Grandaddy or something. It's a really, really, really awesome album! And I'm not just saying that because they're Kiwi..."

The Buzz

The rundown of the music, videos and scenes breaking forth from the underground this week

1 WILD BELLE

Chicago chanteuse Natalie Bergman's transformation from folky charmer to alt-synth seductress has been astounding. Things reached fever pitch when new project Wild Belle – a collaboration with her brother Elliot – was launched when the duo unleashed 'Keep You' via Bandcamp. You could call it pop-reggae, but at the same time the track recalls the chart sheen of Goldfrapp – albeit with a hugely stoned, icy edge sending it skywards. With performances across the pond sending the Yanks loopy, the track gets a release on 12-inch vinyl on Tuesday (February 21) – see *NME.COM/newmusic* for details.

2 SAVAGES

Camille, from French noire-pop specialists John & Jehn, struck out with her new band Savages at London's Shacklewell Arms a few weeks ago, showcasing the kind of proto-punk Patti Smith aura that's guaranteed to put a smirk on any audience's collective gurn. Next week (February 23) they're at the capital's Club The Mammoth night in Hoxton.

3 ELLIPHANT'S 'IN THE JUNGLE'

From the management Svengalis who brought us Niki & The Dove and Icona Pop comes Elliphant. We know precisely nothing about him/her other than that they're probably Swedish, and their debut single 'In The Jungle' sounds like Factory Floor making beats for MIA – ie amazing.

4 POW WOWS' 'SEEING BLACK' VIDEO

With props from King Khan and melodies nicked straight from Cramps HQ, it's fair to say the Toronto four-piece aren't exactly breaking too many new waves. But what they do – like this vid from their 'Nightmare Soda' debut (out now on Get Hip) – they do with dirt-rock aplomb.

5 RULER'S 'KEEP MOVING'

How, exactly, do you measure the distance you were born to run? Why not ask Seattleite Matt Batey, the bedroom bard who, under the guise of Ruler, has crafted an utterly infectious torch-lit paean to Springsteen past. It goes by the name of 'Keep Moving'. Good luck resisting the urge to hit repeat.

PHOTO: ANDREW WHITTON WORDS: MATT WILKINSON, LAURA SNAPES, JONATHAN GARRETT

SCENE REPORT

WHAT'S HOT FOR THE HORRORS

Rhys Webb from The Horrors ponders the crystal ball of new music

Hello and welcome to my third *Radar* instalment. This week we'll be exploring the worlds of five very different groups with one thing in common: they all indulge in mind-expanding music. **Clout**, from Southend-on-Sea, play a psychedelic mix of hip-hop, punk and dub, and their live show is a shimmering affair. Drum machines, loops and synthesised sounds merge with live percussion, bass, brass and tripped-out guitars .

Next up are psychedelic rockers **Purson**. Intricate but not indulgent, they're rocking on the right side of prog, and tracks like 'Spiderwood Farm' sound like they could have been heard at London's legendary Middle Earth club in the late '60s. The band have just recorded with Liam Watson at the Toe Rag studios too. **Blanck Mass** is the mind-melting ambient project of Fuck Buttons' Benjamin John Powers. Released on Mogwai's Rock Action label, his self-titled record is a cosmic journey to the centre of the mind – this is the sound of coming up and never coming down.

If you need awakening from your mushroom dreams, I suggest you check out the heavy freeform freak-out of **Xavier**. I caught them live at The Shacklewell Arms recently and was blown away. The three-piece (featuring members of Bo Ningen and Zongamin) played an improvised instrumental set, and manage to take the listener on a truly magical musical journey.

Finally, if you haven't already, you must hear psychedelic singer-songwriter **Jonathan Wilson**. Tom played me 2011's 'Gentle Spirit' LP and it has been a constant spin on the tour ever since. Echoes of 'Dark Side Of The Moon' float throughout, while the hazy sound of the Californian sunshine brings to mind Buffalo Springfield and friends.

NEXT WEEK'S COLUMNIST:
Jacob Graham from The Drums

Rhys' Top 5

CLOUT
'Maxwell's O'

PURSON
'Spiderwood Farm'

BLANCK MASS
'Raw Deal'

XAVIER
Live videos on YouTube

JONATHAN WILSON
'Canyon In The Rain'

5 To See

This week's unmissable new music shows

DALE EARNHARDT JR JR
The Castle, Manchester
February 16

WET NUNS
Mad Ferret, Preston
February 18

BLEEDING KNEES CLUB (pictured)
Barfly, London
February 20

CITIZENS
Nice'n'Sleazy, Glasgow
February 21

THE MEN
Brudenell Social Club, Leeds
February 21

Clout's Chris was often called the good-looking one

DEREK BREMNER, DEAN CHALKLEY

Marlon! Quick! Your hair's on fire!

LA FEMME

THE GARAGE, LONDON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

CAUGHT LIVE

"French rock is like English wine," John Lennon once famously sniffed, alluding haughtily to the notion that, whatever their cultural prowess in nearly every other artistic field in the 20th century, the French are shite when it comes to picking up a guitar.

Had he stuck around long enough to see the remarkable strides made by the UK viticultural industry in recent years, Lennon may well have been forced to revise his opinion. But then again, La Femme aren't half bad either. The Paris-by-way-of-Biarritz band are in town for their first ever UK show (well, excluding Jersey), and they're great. Centred round the guitar/keys-and-vox duo of Sacha and Marlon (surnames not forthcoming), the group are joined onstage by a drummer, bassist, and pair of girls on vocals who bob semi-interestedly throughout like a pair of druggy marionettes.

Musically feasting on a mix of Cramps-ish surf, yé-yé melody-crush and no-wave stroppiness, nearly all the band's members sport a shock of crudely dyed hair – blue, blonde, ginger – and carry on in a manner that suggests punk without ever delving into the genre's big book o'clichés. Perhaps latching on to this element, some of the crowd go absolutely *mental* during the set.

Back onstage, 'Sur La Planche' sounds like The Drums lost in the death disco, 'La Femme Ressort''s clanking psych-osis would give recent *Radar* champs Toy a run for their money, and closer 'Anti Taxi' is a riot of Dadaist menace propelled by barked instructions to "*take the bus*".

They carry on in a manner that's punk without delving into a big book o'clichés

They end as only a French band could, exhorting audience members to buy copies of an EP whose cover depicts an anonymous lady's giant hairy muff, and to join them for a ciggy round the back after the show. Vive le English wine! ***Alex Denney***

THE WORD

*Why is **Noel Gallagher** jealous of Beady Eye? Why did he make up with Damon? What happened when he and Liam tried to "bring glue sniffing back"? **Matt Wilkinson** puts readers' and musicians' questions to our Godlike Genius*

"Imagine if somebody had knocked on the door and seen me trying to undo this guy's trousers!" Noel Gallagher is sat in his hotel in Australia, staring out the window into the pouring rain, just being a Godlike Genius.

"I'm having breakfast the other day, right," he tells us about tour life Down Under. "Now, I don't like getting up early, particularly if I've had a drink, but the porter comes in with my breakfast and I knew it straight away – he was a bit too *chirpy* for my liking at fucking 8am. He said, 'I'm not supposed to do this but is there any chance I can get an autograph?' So I go, 'Yeah man, sure, whatever'.

"Now, he had suit trousers on, you know, like what hotel people wear?" We do indeed. "And you know the back pocket in them trousers? It's basically just a slit in the arse. Well fucking somehow, this guy's got the CD in there. And it's fucking stuck..."

Noel enters full-on Larry David mode now. "So I'm stood there looking at me breakfast, and he's pulling at the back of his trousers, but the CD's not coming. And he's starting to sweat. And I end up round the back of the trousers, but he's there yanking too. So I'm going to him, 'Look mate, just relax – let it all out!' Anyway, this goes on for longer than it should, until in the end I just grab him by the fucking shoulders and say: 'STOP'. And finally, I manage to edge it out of him. So I then open the cover, I spread it out, and I say, 'What's your name?' And then he gives me the killer line."

Noel pauses. "Oh, it's not for me. It's for my brother."

Noel erupts. "WHAT?! Your fucking brother?! We've been in here fucking 15 minutes?! My fucking eggs have gone cold, and it's all for your fucking brother?! Get the FUCK out! Unbelievable, man!"

With his relationship with his own brother still at a stalemate (there's been no movement on Oasis since we last spoke), Noel's in super-solo mode right now – chipper, playing sell-out gigs around the world and, as he puts it, "just waiting for something to go horribly wrong, like it usually does. But it hasn't yet. It just keeps getting better."

In keeping with this frame of mind, he's chomping at the bit to get on with the business of answering *NME*'s job lot of questions, pitched by fans, pop stars and our journalists. He's already primed in 'opinionated' mode, having recently slammed *The Daily Mail* for twisting a quote of his about how "under Thatcher, who ruled us with an iron rod, great art was made", to try and make him sound like a Tory. And today there's much more for him to riff on, from Paul Weller's kitchen apron, to making peace (and records) with Damon Albarn, sniffing glue, eating Chinese, shooting people in Selfridges and – oh yeah – discussing the "right fucking saga" that is his forthcoming album with Amorphous Androgynous.

Before we can get on with the questioning though, a quick word about what being named Godlike Genius actually means to Noel. "Well, it's great to get it from *NME*. I'm gonna enjoy it, man. I'm gonna enjoy the fucking night when I get it. I always enjoy the fucking NME Awards anyway, but I'm gonna DOUBLY enjoy it this time. I'll see you there, right?" Too right you will, Noel. Now, let the biggest gob in rock speak his mind...

CAMERA PRESS/JUDE EDGINGTON, OFFSIDE, TOM OXLEY, ROGER SARGENT, MATT SALACUSE, ANDREW WHITTON

OF GOD

NOEL'S GODLIKE PICKS

The Chief on his own Godlike Geniuses

MARIO BALOTELLI

"OK, he's a footballer, but I bet if he picked up an instrument he'd be fucking amazing. He restores your faith in human nature! I'm so proud he's playing for Man City. You see him when he's not in his football kit and you just think, 'He fucking looks cool as fuck!'"

ANDREW INNES, PRIMAL SCREAM

"He's a wizard! All the stuff that Primal Scream have made over the years, he's behind it all. He is conducting that band and he is a genius."

EBBOT LUNDBERG, THE SOUNDTRACK OF OUR LIVES

"They're fucking amazing, that band. I fucking absolutely love him and I love his group."

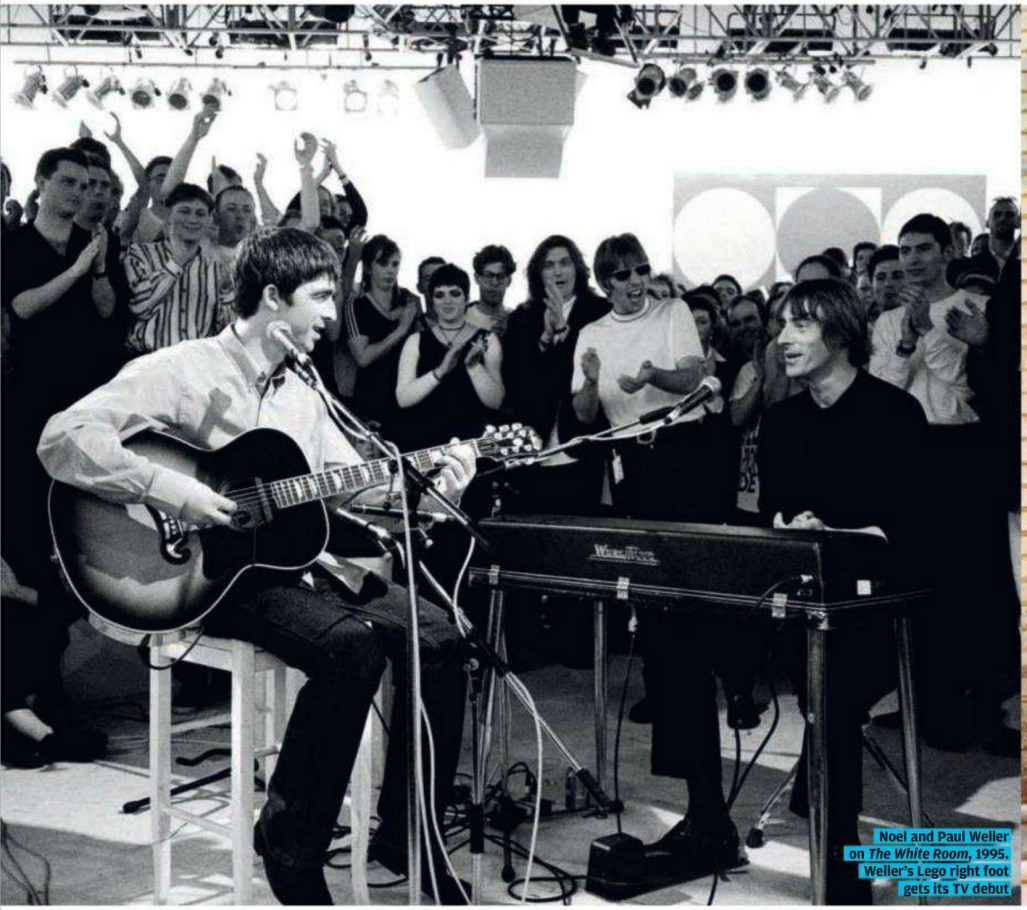
Did you and the rest of Oasis fight over who got custody of Gem Archer once you'd split?
Jack Steele, 21, Newcastle
"Ha ha ha! Er... no, there was none of that. I should have had custody of Gem though, and I'm fucking jealous that he's in Beady Eye and he's not in the High Flying Birds, I've gotta say. He's my mate, but no. I left with dignity and grace, and everybody did their own thing."
***NME:* If/when Oasis do reform, who aside from you and Liam would make the cut?**
"It would be the last line-up. We always used to say that whoever was onstage that night, that was the definitive line-up. There was never a *definitive* line-up of Oasis. The last gig that we ever did is, to me, the definitive line-up. So it's always me, Gem, Andy, Liam and Chris Sharrock."

Why do you hate Christmas?

Paul Weller
"I hate it because... well, I don't hate it. I like the Christmas spirit. But I have that all year round anyway. I just hate the fact that everything has to be condensed into this two-week period, where you have to be Christmassy. I can just see through the bullshit of Christmas, do you know what I mean? And you know January's coming, and if there's one thing that fucking winds me up more than Christmas, it's January. The January sales! I'd fucking take a machine gun to Selfridges. Literally, on January 15, I'd walk in, level the fucking place. What are you all looking for bargains for? Fuck off! Go home! Nonsense."
***NME:* Does Paul Weller like Christmas?**
"Well, evidently, it would seem so. (*Ponders for a moment*) I don't think I've ever got a Christmas card off him, but is he Christmassy? I'd like to think he is, yeah. Me and him are neighbours now, if you can believe that. His front room looks directly into my kitchen. It's very disconcerting. He'll send me texts at night, 8pm or summat, saying, 'Come to the window'. I'm not fucking joking! This is for real. I'm thinking: 'Is he gonna be there in his Union Jack fucking pinny, or what?!'"

What was the most stupid/funniest thing you did when you were at school?
Sam McCann, Dublin
"Well, there's a couple of things I've still not been caught for. The stupidest thing? (*Thinks hard*) Is it stupid to go to school really fucking high, like properly fucking out of it? I mean, back in the day we were all professional glue sniffers. Me and Liam were talking about bringing it back once actually. We had this very same conversation – 'Nobody sniffs glue any more! Bring it back!' We were gonna do a tour on glue. You think I'm fucking joking! I am not. We had it all sussed out. But yeah, I used to go to school on glue." ▶

"A CLOTHES RANGE? YOU SHOULD LEAVE THAT SHIT TO GIRLS"
NOEL GALLAGHER



Noel and Paul Weller on *The White Room*, 1995. Weller's Lego right foot gets its TV debut

At home with Meg Mathews. Just putting the bins out, probably

***NME:* Have you heard of ROFLcopter?**
"I read something about this, I can't pronounce it – what's it called?"
ROFLcopter.
"Russell-copter?! What is it? Like bathsalts and all that shite people were snorting about a year ago?"
Yeah. But it makes you shit yourself.
"People don't take it because it makes you shit yourself, surely though, do they?"
Well, kind of – I don't think you care what you end up doing on it because you're so fucked.
"Right. See, I'm from the old school of drug-taking where it HAS to really enhance your night out. Being hit on the head with a shovel – and then shitting yourself – at The Haçienda wouldn't have really gone down very well."

"I'M SO GLAD I MET UP WITH DAMON AND APOLOGISED"
NOEL GALLAGHER

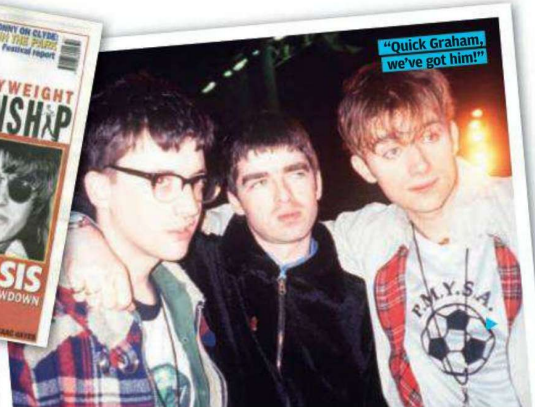
Would you consider doing a film soundtrack?
Noel Fielding

"Yeah, I would like to do one. If anyone's writing a western film out there, I would love to do one along the lines of *Dead Man*, that Neil Young soundtrack [from the 1995 film by Jim Jarmusch]. I've got lots of spaghetti western-esque incidental music. So Mr Tarantino, if you're reading, you know my name..."

Damon Albarn or Thom Yorke: which of the two would you rather collaborate with?
Mike Z, 33, Nashville
"Oh, Damon."
***NME:* You met up recently, didn't you?**
"Yeah, yeah. It was quite a moment. We'd never been in the same room for maybe 10 or 15 years. And I always said to myself that if I ever was, I'd go and say, 'Fucking hell, alright man?' and shake his hand and let bygones be bygones and all that. So, anyway, we were out at some nightclub a couple of months ago, and I was going to the bar. Turned the corner and bumped straight into him. We both did that thing at the same time and went 'Wow! Wahey! Fucking hell!' We had a beer and were like, 'What was all that about?' and 'Remember that time...?' It was a great relief. I'm glad I've seen him and shook his hand and apologised for all the shit."
So, 17 years since the infamous chart battle, Blur Vs Oasis is finally, properly over?
"Yeah. There you go – that's over and done with now."
What about Radiohead?
"Well, I find Damon a lot more interesting than Thom Yorke. Not that I don't like Thom, or dislike Radiohead. I think they're great live – but I couldn't listen to one of their records."
Have you seen them when they play with two drummers?
"I need to give Thom Yorke a bit of advice here. You only get two drummers 'cos you can't sack the other one. Just get rid of the cunt! If he needs me to phone him up, I've got rid of enough drummers. I'm an expert. But if I was gonna make a record, it would be with Damon. For a start, he's as mad as a box of frogs. Number two, he'd get loads of hip-hop dudes working on it, which itself would be fucking mental. And number three? It would be a better record."
It would be so weird if you two actually hooked up. The ultimate 'What the fuck?!' music collaboration...
"Ha ha ha! Imagine if we end up doing some Britpop nostalgia tour like what Slade and all them lot do for glam! It would be fucking mega! Supergrass... Pulp... Blur... Oasis... and then Menswear doing the merchandise! Hey, listen mate, don't fucking chortle because we might all be skint when we're 60."

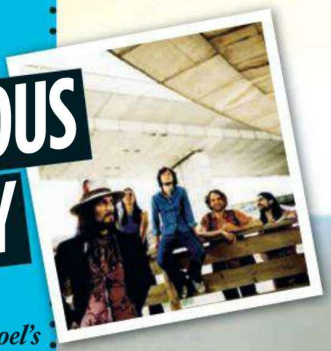
Which musicians do you still look up to? Anyone you could meet now who'd make you feel like a fanboy again?

Freddie Cowan, The Vaccines
"I've never asked anybody for an autograph, but I have got a photograph of me and Neil Young for some reason. So I still think he's the don. And, I guess, Bob Dylan."
***NME:* You met Maradona too, in 1998, didn't you?**
"Yeah – he was great. He was asking us to kiss the ▶



LAWRENCE WATSON, CAPITAL, PAUL SLATTERY/RETNA

AMORPHOUS AGONY



The follow-up to Noel's debut, in collaboration with Amorphous Androgynous, was set to come out this year. Not anymore...

NOEL: "IT'S TURNING INTO a fucking right saga at the minute. Those boys had a deadline for it to be finished before I went on tour, which was October 23. And unfortunately for them, they've only delivered a couple of tracks, and they're trying to mix it while I'm on the road... and it's not working. We all need to be in the same room before it gets done, and whatever they've sent me, I don't like. And it is, unfortunately, a record that will depend entirely on the mixes, because it's not song-based.

"Let's put it this way: the High Flying Birds album sounds *great*. This, at the minute, doesn't sound like a great album. But with that album taking off as well as it has done, the release date of the next one was always getting pushed back anyway. I've got a break in the middle of this tour in July, so now the plan is to do something then, and then to finish it off after the tour in October. So it might come out at the end of the year, but it's more likely to be next year now.

"I set the benchmark pretty high with this record, and I'm not just putting a record out for the fucking sake of it. At the moment it's not a great record – so it won't come out until it is. It was meant to be a companion piece to this album because it was started before I did High Flying Birds, but I felt that the versions of 'If I Had A Gun...' and 'The Death Of You And Me' were too psychedelic for a comeback record. It will come out, because it's fucking cost me a fortune. But where it is now, if I could give it a mark out of 100 it would be, like, 65."

Backstage in Japan earlier this year, Noel tries hard to hide his 'Morning Glory'. Top: Amorphous Androgynous

PARIS GOT FASHION. WE GOT WHISKEY.

(SORRY, PARIS.)

JACK DANIEL'S OLD No.7 BRAND TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Drinking responsibly is always in fashion.

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for the facts **drinkaware.co.uk**

The 'definitive' Oasis line-up (ie the one where Liam had shit hair)

DEAN CHALKLEY, STEFAN DE BATSELLIER

hand of god! He blessed us and all that shit. I liked him. When his security come and said (*puts on Mafioso voice*) 'Maradona will see *only* the brothers,' it was like, 'Yeah man!' It's like an audience with the Pope!"

So Bonehead, Guigsy and Alan weren't invited?

"(*Laughs*) Nope! And I remember going 'Fucking hell, lads! Fuck all of y'all! Ha ha. See ya!!'"

Now even The Stone Roses are back together, it seems inconceivable that Oasis and The Smiths won't eventually reform too. Which will come first, do you reckon?

Jamie Fullerton, Features Editor

"I don't think either Oasis or The Smiths will reform. I think Morrissey and Marr, probably, but I don't think The Smiths will ever reform. And Oasis, at the moment, no. Morrissey and Marr is probably more on the cards. But then again, saying that, if they're gonna do it they'd have surely done it by now, wouldn't they?"

***NME:* What's the situation with Oasis at the moment, then?**

"Well, nothing's changed. But it's a tricky thing, really. Until I'm actually in that position – and I'm just simply not at the moment – it's just not something for me to say. There you go, and here we are."

If you were to release your own clothing label, what type of clothing would be featured in it, what would you call it and why?

Kriss, 19, Swindon

"I find the whole clothing range thing, in regards to men, a bit uncomfortable. You should leave that kind of shit to the girls, do you know what I mean? Girls should have their own labels to sell their own perfume, do their own knickers and all that shit. I've never even understood men going shopping together. What the fuck is all that about?"

***NME:* So that's a 'no' to male clothing lines full-stop then?**

"(*In agreement*) No, no, no, no, no. Men *discussing* clothes together? Nope, even that's wrong. The worst thing anybody can say to me is, 'Oh, where'd you get those jeans?' Fuck off! Where did I get these jeans?! Mind your own fucking business! It's the kind of thing that's crept into society these days when men say to other men, 'Fucking hell mate, you look well'. What does that mean? What are you supposed to say to that? It fucking drives me absolutely mad."

Why did you stop the Urban Cookie Collective's drum'n' bass version of 'Champagne Supernova' from coming out – thus depriving a generation of Britpop ravers?

Fred Macpherson, Spector

"Because it was shit. I was in a bar once in fucking Bangkok – I know that's a line that usually ends in a different tale from what I'm gonna tell you – and I was listening to a hi-NRG version of 'Some Might Say'. Can you believe that?! I went up to the DJ and went 'What's this?' and he goes 'This is Oasis'. I'm like 'No, WHO is it?!?!' and he goes 'It's Oasis!' I never found out. But to get back to the 'Champagne Supernova' thing, I don't recall ever actually hearing ▶

it. But I'm not a fan of the dance cover in general."

What's the strangest fan experience you've ever had?
Leanne Smith, Manchester
"I remember getting home one afternoon when I'd moved out of London. I'd moved from Supernova Heights in north London out into the countryside in Buckinghamshire. And I'd been out one afternoon and come back and there was a bit of commotion in the kitchen. There was a guy sat at the kitchen table who had just broke into my house. Just a guy. And this is just after George Harrison got stabbed and all. He'd travelled all this way, and he'd heard I recently moved there so he was just in there waiting for me, like it was the most normal thing in the world. I was with a friend of mine who happened to be a black dude, so we sat around the kitchen table, made him a cup of tea and kept him talking while my missus went to call the police. Now, where I lived was on a country lane and the police couldn't find the house, so I went down to the gate to let them in and said, 'There's a bit of a weirdo in the kitchen – I don't know what's happened, but it's pretty fucking freaky.' And as I've gone outside the guy's tried to make a run for it, so my mate's grabbed him. Anyway, the police go up the driveway – it's about a quarter of a mile – and by the time I've got there they've got my mate in a headlock! The black guy! The other guy's just fucking stood there! And I'm like, 'Are you fucking kidding me?! *He's* me fucking mate! It's *this* guy here who's just broken into my house!' I was like, 'Wow! Fucking hell!' Sign of the fucking times or what?!"

Will you be performing as a warm up act for The Stone Roses for their Manchester shows this summer at Heaton Park?
John McKenzie, 14, Greenock
"Unequivocally no – I'm in America when it happens, actually. But I have no doubt in my mind that with it being festival season and everything, our paths will most certainly cross. I'm a bit gutted I won't be there to witness it, actually, but there you go. I'm busy. But I suppose with the wonders of modern technology, I will be watching people put it up on YouTube as it happens."
***NME:* How important is that reunion to you?**
"Well, I'm glad The Stone Roses are doing it because they'll get fucking paid for it, you know? For me, personally, I wouldn't be sat here talking to you if it wasn't for them. Or The Smiths. Or Paul Weller. So good luck to 'em – good luck to 'em all."

To watch the ultimate guide to Noel Gallagher, head to NME.COM/video now

SETLIST SECRETS

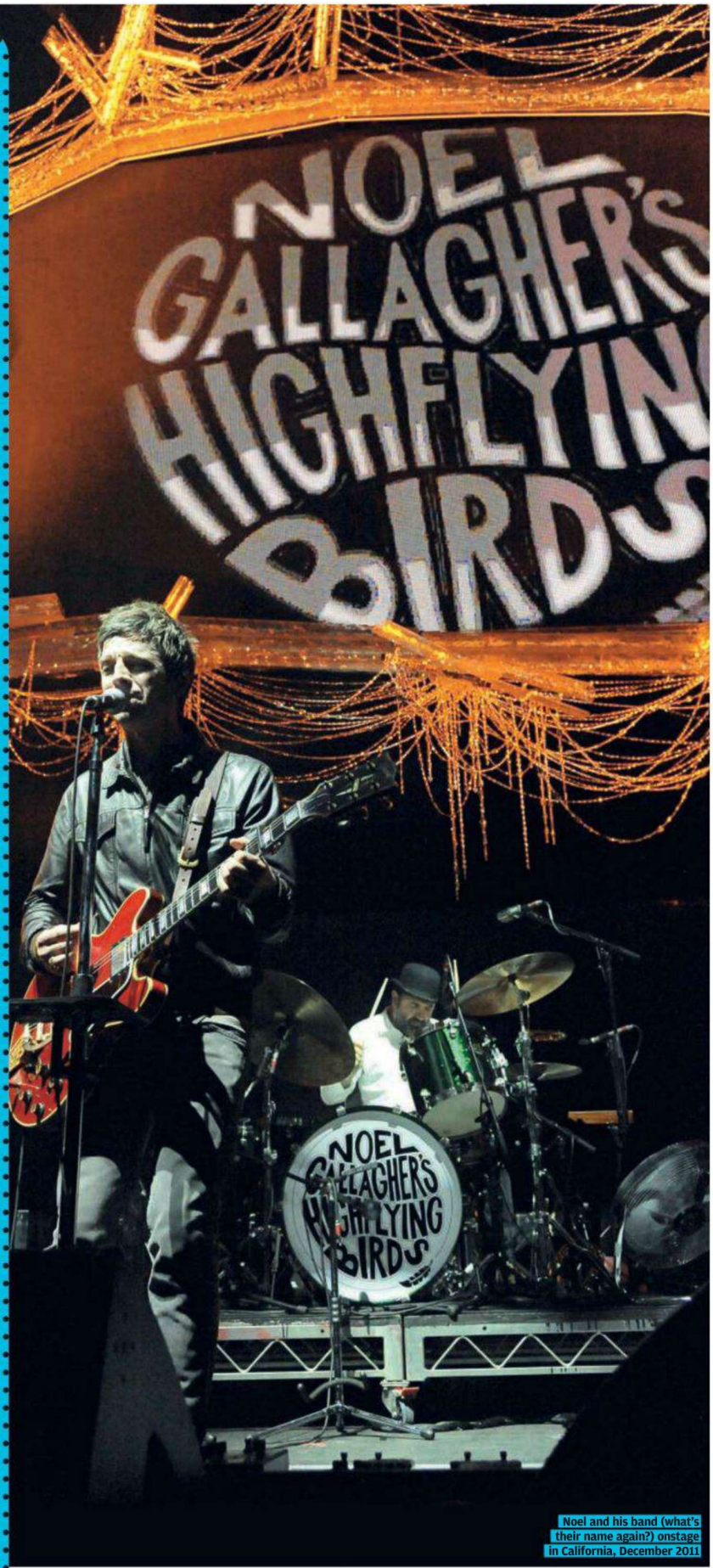
With his tour just kicking off, here's Noel on some of the songs he has picked to play (and one he hasn't)

'(IT'S GOOD) TO BE FREE'
"One day in rehearsals I did this new version of '...Free', and everyone kind of stopped what they were doing and went, 'Wow, that sounds fucking mega!' That was it – if somebody else says it sounds great, I'm up for doing it. It's a perfect opener for the set. This version sounds a bit Scouse, like The La's or Shack."

'SUPERSONIC'
"This is another one that I would do in soundchecks. But somebody said to me one day, 'You know there's a version of you doing it that new way on YouTube?' Some kid had taped me doing it in rehearsal at the Royal Albert Hall, and I found it and thought, 'Wow, it takes the song somewhere else!' The actual [recorded] version is fast becoming my favourite ever Oasis song."

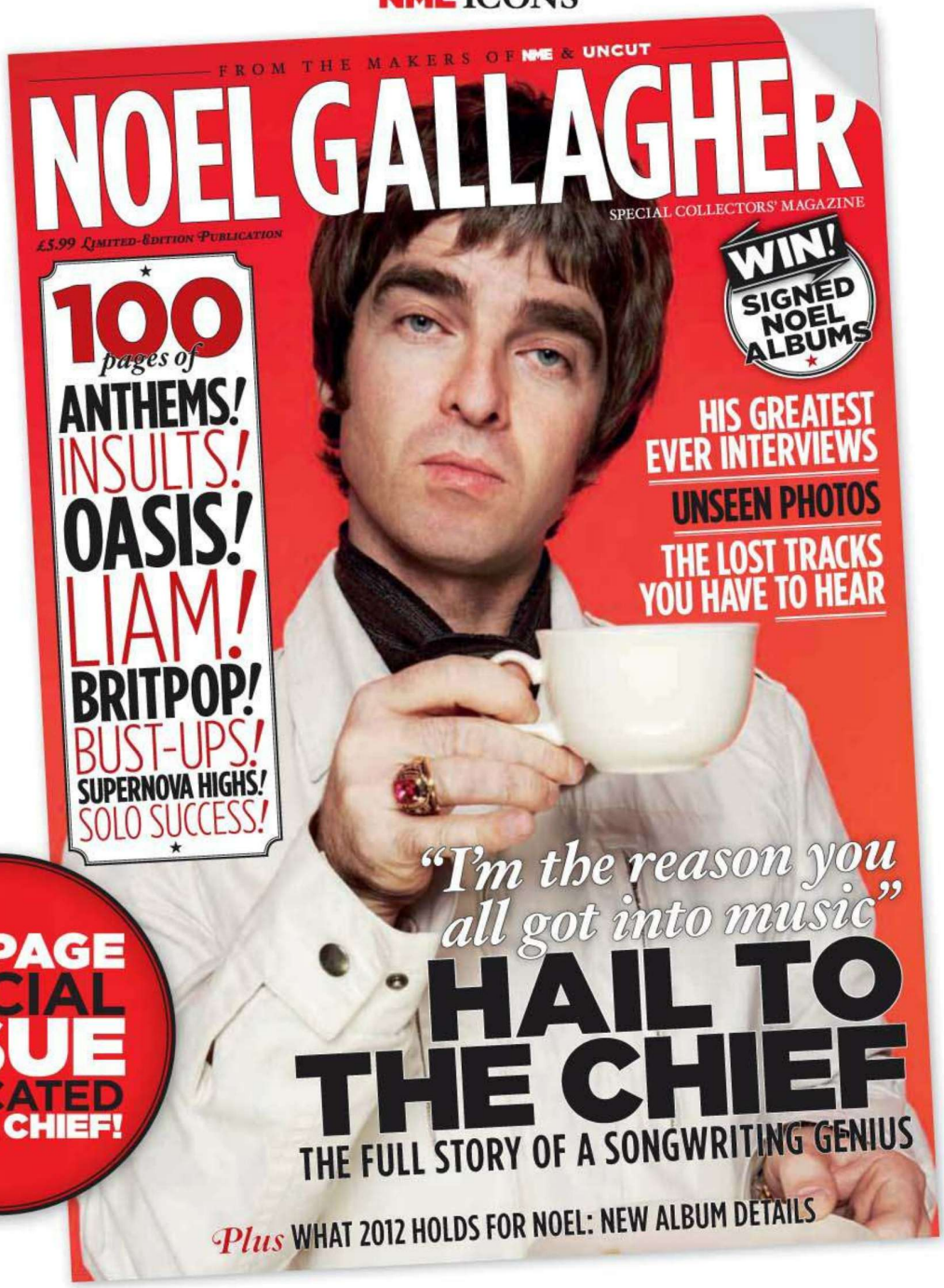
'TALK TONIGHT'
"We never played the B-sides enough when I was in Oasis, because the stadium vibes took over. But it's like when I used to go and see The Smiths and they'd always play those fucking brilliant B-sides, and I'd always think, 'Fucking hell, 'This Charming Man''s great... but 'Rubber Ring'?! That's the shit!'"

'WONDERWALL'... OR NOT?
"I'm not gonna do 'Wonderwall' anymore. When I do acoustic gigs and I do that other version of it, it's fine because you're sat down and it's polite, so everyone will listen to you sing it. What would I do instead? Maybe 'Whatever'. Oasis only played that when we toured the single itself. We just didn't bother with it after that. It hasn't been finalised, though."



Noel and his band (what's their name again?) onstage in California, December 2011

JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC



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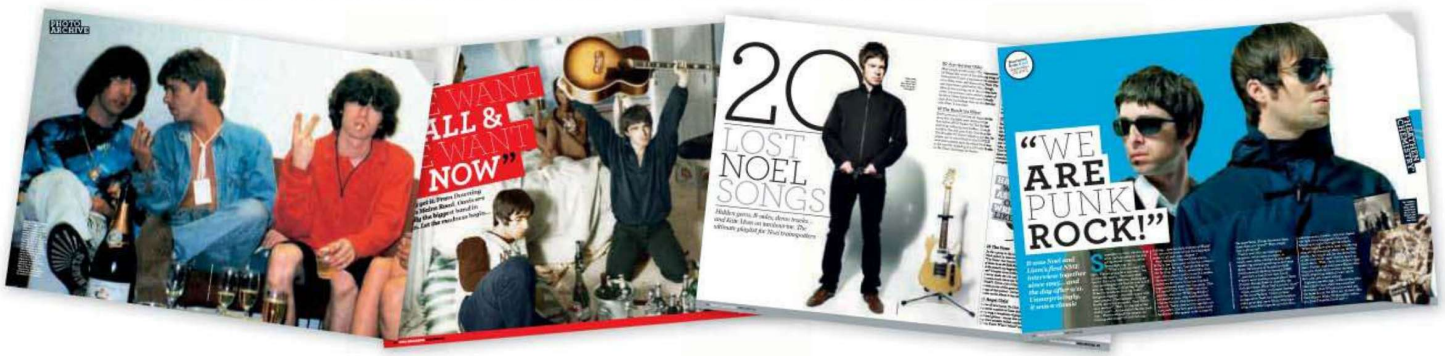


"WE TREAT DEATH AS A CONSTANT COMPANION"

*Atlanta's **Mastodon** have invaded with their anvil-heavy album 'The Hunter'. **Gavin Haynes** hears how obsessions with death, space sex and Moby Dick brought them to metal's top table*

PHOTOS: ANDY FORD

"At these shows," one teenage fan says, "you can watch the *audience* as much as the performance. There's this *spiritual* energy that flows between band and audience. A feedback thing."

He clings to the balcony as more and more black hoodies pack around him. It's a Sunday, and Bristol's O2 Academy is packed to stupidity. There's an air of event here, a metal summit, like everyone west of Swindon who has ever emitted a death growl has arrived to offer their own benediction. As the band switch metronomically between astral wig-out and sharp thrash, looking backwards from the stairwell you can see 500 heads first sway in union, then bang as one, like the quality assurance line in a nodding dog factory. Onstage, four Atlanta hair-heads are coming to the apex of their 90-minute journey to the limits of their musical dexterity. "Mast-o-don." The crowd growl. "Mast. O. Don."

Five albums in, Mastodon are big news. They're filling the O2 Academy Brixton. In the metal press they've had more album of the year awards than you've had hot Satan. Their fans are deeply, tribally dedicated. They are the first metal band in a very long time to appear on *...Jools Holland*, death-growling merrily alongside Bon Iver. The Flaming Lips' Wayne Coyne loves 'em. Dave Grohl's a big fan. Even Feist has recorded one of their songs for Record Store Day.

They are, though they'd buck at the tag, 'clever metal': 14-minute, multi-part songs that interweave time signatures, spiralling riffs-within-riffs, elements of prog, Sabbath-style sludgy heavy metal and sharper, more death-metal chops. It's all wrapped up in complex concept albums about the elements and dense, bookish lyrics. The record they were originally going to make instead of what became their 2011 return to basics, 'The Hunter', would have ended with the tale of "an underwater volcano, and the sun comes out of it, and it swallows up all these people that have been outfitted with gills". 2009's 'Crack The Skye' was about "astral travel, wormholes and Tsarist Russia", and other stuff so proggy it'd give Rick Wakeman a migraine. The record before that? 'Leviathan': a multi-part re-telling of outsize American literary classic *Moby Dick*.

"But," drummer Brann Dailor declares, "by the time we got to 'The Hunter', we'd done that *so* many times – this intricate, labyrinthine song structure that lasts for 14 minutes... each one is like running a marathon."

Brann and bassist Troy Sanders sit before us on a slender couch. Brann is like a lean Josh Homme: the same boy-man features, similarly declarative sense of what he wants. Troy is softer spoken, a chill dude with warm eyes whose father was once a professional clown. Scary moustachioed recovering alcoholic Bill Kelliher and scary swivel-eyed mountain man Brent Hinds are elsewhere, geeking through their modes and alternate tunings for a guitar magazine. Brent has had three newsworthy fistfights in the past few years, the final of which, with the bassist from System Of A Down, landed him in a coma for three days.

Last year, Bill was hospitalised twice with alcohol-related pancreatitis. It's safe to say we're with the more genteel wing of the Don.

"Ordinarily," Brann continues, "we would spend a lot of time making life difficult for ourselves in the studio. If a part was too simple, we'd say: 'How can we make it more complex?' There's a great payoff when you get that right. But this time round, because there was so much stuff going on outside the band, it became difficult for us to pile on the pressure in the studio..."

Whether it's Judas Priest writing lines about the Reaper's scythe or Slayer banging on about chopping up a corpse, metal has always found fresh energy in confronting death. Mastodon, however, have by far the most Dalai Lama take on the hereafter. "They treat death as the constant companion," one reviewer wrote, "something that will happen to all... a celebration of life."

"Yeah. I'd say that's true," Brann considers, as his wrist twists so that his tattoo of his grandfather's favourite saying: 'You oughta be glad', comes into view. "What better way to channel anything from life, than to turn it into something positive?"

"When we come together as a band it's not like: 'Hey guys, let's put a positive twist on things'," Troy agrees. "It's like: 'That's who we are'."

Brann admits he's obsessed with death. He still thinks about it "like, every day. I never really thought about it 'til my sister died when I was 15. I sorta felt immortal up 'til then." Brann's sister was called Skye. Her suicide, at age 14, was the other key lyrical driver in 'Crack The Skye'. "We're not morbid," he claims. "It's about remembering who they were, and their importance to us."

Which is how 'The Hunter' became 'The Hunter'. In December 2010, the brother of Brent Hinds died unexpectedly. He had been shooting deer and had dragged one back to his truck. That's where they eventually found him: dead from a heart attack at 42. A few months later, the wife of the band's accountant, to whom they had all been close, passed away. Her personal motto, "Pursue happiness with diligence", is the sole lyric of 'The Sparrow'.

In that brittle context they dispensed with many of the fripperies of old, and made something much simpler: their first boldly *non*-concept album, full of whiplash riffs and a throaty honesty. Not that they also lost their slightly raised eyebrow for metal's absurdities with songs like 'Blasteroid', about "a video game that mixes asteroids with haemorrhoids". Or 'Stargasm'. Brann grins: "It's about having sex in space."

Mastodon are capable of combining great seriousness of intent, a very adult emotional range, and the sort of phenomenal willpower that you need to achieve their levels of musicianship, with the ability to just blow it all off for a laugh. Not to take loss, fear, death, or anything else, too seriously.

Even tonight, as the likes of 'The Last Baron' cough into cacophony, they place feet on monitors, but with just a glint of ironic recognition of the gesture. They play Quo-like, side-by-side, but retain in part the sense that sometimes, ergonomically, this is just the best way to play guitar. They're both winking at and powered by metal's long list of tropes.

This knack may, however, be unevenly distributed. Halfway into a discussion of 'clever metal', Troy pipes up. "What," he asks, "is innuendo?"

Brann thinks a bit. "It's like when your mom is laughing at *Will & Grace*, and you go, 'Mom, you do *know* they're talking about fucking each other in the ass, right?'"

They've got a big one and it's only going up and up: Mastodon are spurting metal into new places.

Watch the video for 'Dry Bone Valley' at NME.COM/video now

HUNTERS' PATH

Mastodon's timeline so far

2000
Brann and Bill meet Troy and Brent at a concert. They decide to jam

2002
Release 'Remission', and inaugurate the tradition of having the last track on their first three albums relate to *The Elephant Man*

2004
'Leviathan', a concept album about *Moby Dick*, comes out. Open for Slayer

2006
'Blood Mountain' contains a hidden track from Josh Homme and keyboards from The Mars Volta

2007
Brent gets into a fight with the bassist from System Of A Down. Spends three days in a coma

2009
'Crack The Skye' is released

2010
Bill develops pancreatitis after too much booze

2011
Release 'The Hunter'. Brent recovers a guitar that was stolen a decade earlier

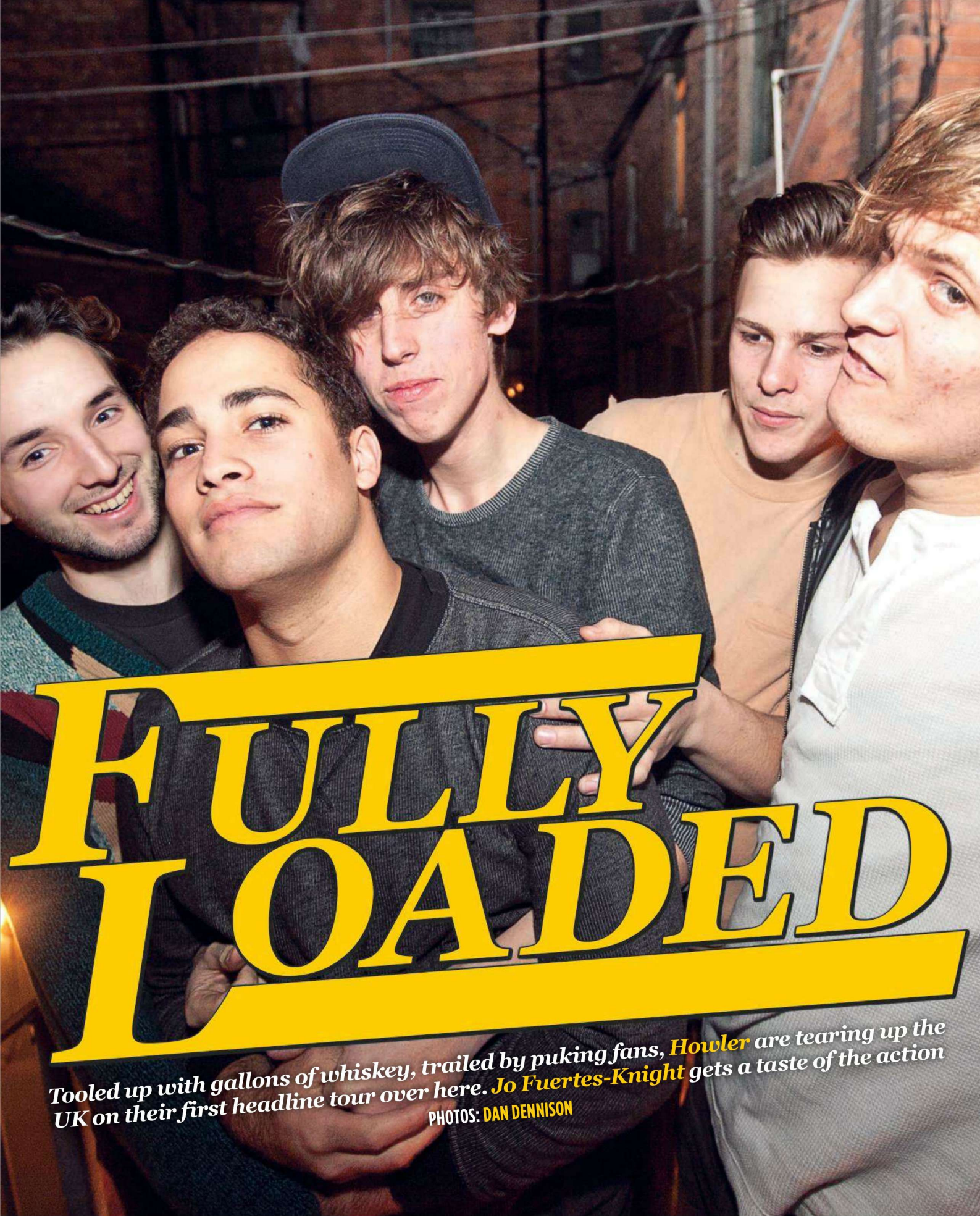
"I THINK ABOUT DEATH, LIKE, EVERY DAY"

Brann Dailor

Troy Sanders: So metal it actually hurts

Brent Hinds, probably about to pick a fight with something

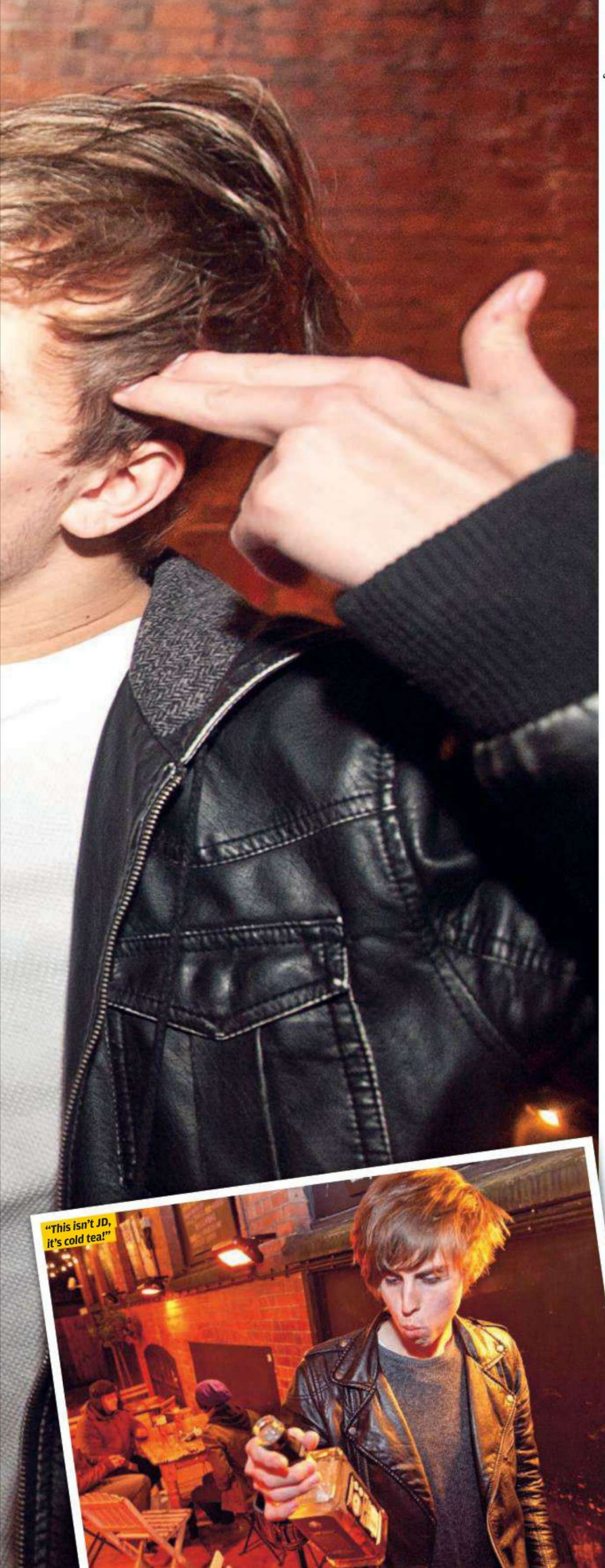
Guitarist Bill Kelliher and (left) drummer Brann Dailor



FULLY LOADED

*Tooled up with gallons of whiskey, trailed by puking fans, **Howler** are tearing up the UK on their first headline tour over here. **Jo Fuertes-Knight** gets a taste of the action*

PHOTOS: DAN DENNISON



"We handcuff all our groupies to radiators, tickle them with feathers and keep them as our 'ticky-bears'," says Jordan Gatesmith of his on-the-road highlights so far.

He and his band Howler are swinging between tour van-induced delirium and whiskey-fuelled mischief when *NME* corrals them in Manchester, smack bang in the middle of their first UK headline tour. They excitedly shout what they want on the rider for their *next* tour ("A private jet! Suction cup dildos! We want fur... and studs, can we dress like rappers for free?").

As well as getting used to the more modest riders that this nation's gig promoters provide, they're getting used to the Baltic chill of the north – and bassist France Camp is keen to divulge that we only just missed him frolicking naked across the snowy moors, an experience which was apparently "like running through heaven". Now all fully clothed, the guys seem relaxed, if a little stir-crazy, as they head into the green room of the Deaf Institute venue.

By the evening, Howler have filled the place. They launch into 'Beach Sluts', immediately triggering some serious audience bromances, with one guy cooing, "He looks like Julian Casablancas," before adding: "But they're definitely their own band." He's not wrong. While The Strokes' debut brought energy with an air of New York cool, Howler bring it with a raw and unaffected edge that is endlessly endearing.

Having just been on the road supporting The Vaccines, Howler's star has risen – their own shows have switched from being full of people curious about the next hyped guitar hope to something more fervent. Guitarist Ian Nygaard says, "Obviously this has been much less luxurious than The Vaccines tour, but the big difference is that *we* have fans now. I find it so weird that there are boys the same age as Jordan who want pictures with him."

"We've had a really weird demographic of people turning up," chirps Jordan. "So we'll have these teenage guys, then dads, and then there are the 14-year-old girls."

"Jordan gets all the girls in the UK, I don't get any because I'm, like, five feet tall," keyboardist Max Petrek jokes. "I'll flirt but we don't get nasty with any fans," Jordan grins. "We just tickle them." "I let them pee in my mouth!" says drummer Brent, the alleged son of Prince, who we're *sure* he wouldn't have inherited this sex act preference from. "I reckon 44 groupies have gone missing so far..."

Though they may be prone to playing themselves down with potty-mouthed, fratty jokes, they're not completely unaware of how things are moving for them. Quizzed about if they feel things are going well, Brent deliberates, "We know the album's doing well, we've sold out venues and the shows have been great... but then you get back into this van. It's just hard to tell when you're in the middle of it all."

"That fucking Rip-VAN-Winkle" Jordan butts in. "We get in that van, then just cry for hours. I love to hate it." It's a fact he reiterates as post-gig he manages to expertly slip away from two dedicated girls who've stayed 'til the bitter end. Instead of retiring to the vehicle, he quietly slinks off for an evening of "crying to Buddy Holly's discography" in the front room of none other than Johnny Marr. Thanks to Rough Trade's lineage, of which Jordan has openly been in awe, the band were introduced to Marr, who's fast become a fan – his son Nile has joined the tour as a support act, with his project Man Made. Although Howler have been modest about Marr's blessing, they talk in whispers about how much the early Smiths sound may affect future projects.

Regrouping in the morning to set off for Nottingham, the van is again the centre of another love-hate incident, a shoe mark on the back door making for a frosty reception from tour manager Wayne.

"Ian kicked the van..." Max teases.

"JORDAN GETS ALL THE UK GIRLS"
MAX PETREK, KEYS

We pile in, climbing over a bin-bag heaving with spirits. Jordan launches into a tale about their booking agent. "He got us so drunk to the point where I kept telling him I was going to fuck his wife over and over again. But then he disappeared, so me and Max kept drinking, then out of nowhere he just fucking threw up all down himself. We ended up passing out in the bathroom with Max asleep on the toilet and I was in the bath until 7am."

Ian pitches in: "Yeah, and that was my fucking birthday."

Jordan: "Oh yeah, it was Ian's birthday and he spent all day bringing us blankets and water. Being a good ticky-bear."

On the boozy flipside, the band bore the brunt of a pissed Brighton crowd only a couple of days earlier. "Somebody tried to punch one of our label people because Jordan was five minutes' late, and walking to the stage like a cock," explains Ian.

Jordan: "I wasn't being a cock."

Ian: "You were being arrogant."

Jordan: "OK, maybe I was being a cock. Anyway, I was walking slowly because I was drunk and this guy grabs me and goes, 'Average'. I was like, 'OK, whatever'. But then he kept trying to make eye contact so he could say 'Average'. That guy was a dick, but we still had a good show."

Despite the upset, the band seem genuinely taken aback by their UK

reception, hailing their London show at XOYO as "unbelievable". Jordan enthuses, "That gig was crazy. We had 400 people packed in, our first crowdsurfers and people shouting lyrics back at us."

So having successfully got Londoners to lose their shit, is it safe to say that Howler have rapidly built an affinity with the UK? Ian reflects, "The scene in the UK is so different from the US. I think when people decide they like a guitar band here, they really go all out, it's special to them. So I guess in some ways it does feel like we've been adopted by the British."

There have already been rumbles of a second Howler album, albeit quiet ones. Jordan immediately counters. "We're going to release another EP immediately and it will suck. It'll have a mixture of country and dubstep and a 20-minute jazz track. Then we'll have one song that's just the sound of Brent beating off." But, coaxed into some more serious answers, he concedes, "We want something out summer 2013, but we're concentrating on touring a shitload for this album. We definitely want to start prepping for the next in the fall and keep things moving. Quality control comes before putting it out quickly. But yeah, I get fucking bored if things don't move fast."

The band take some final swigs from a bottle of JD while mulling over which whiskeys they'd like to graduate onto, before we're all bizarrely summoned into the gents toilets where a young man is swaying with a fine film of vomit down his skinny jeans. He lunges towards the puzzled frontman, slurring, "I LOVE YOU JORDAN GATESMITH!" before returning to hug the toilet. It's time to take on the Notts crowd.

What starts as a small but enthusiastic audience swells from the rear, as the set ends with a flourish as 'Back Of Your Neck' kicks in. Encore and a few sweaty hugs out of the way, the band make for another speedy exit as more wild-eyed fans follow, clutching posters and plectrums to sign, all the time craning for a glimpse behind the dressing room door. Meanwhile Jordan is holed up on the other side frowning at a fridge full of beers with no bottle opener.

Later, after turfing-out time, again a few fans have hung back, grinning like kids at Christmas as the band heap the equipment back into the dreaded van. We say our goodbyes as they head off to Newcastle, grinning with tales of Geordie binge-drinking and girls with the ability to not feel the cold.

On the surface Howler come across as the poster children for self-assured precociousness, but on closer inspection they're much more. A scrappy bundle of energy and talent pumping out garage-rock at its finest, they are learning the ropes at a dizzying rate and perfecting it one whiskey and one late-night listening session with Johnny Marr at a time. Adoption: approved.

"NO MASTURBATING IN TOWELS!"

Howler's rules of the road

NO WANKING
IAN: **"There was an incident with some semen in a towel hidden under Jordan's pillow. That's all we can say."**

TRAVEL LIGHT
MAX: **"We fucking hate loading and unloading. Just any kind of physical effort you want to lessen."**

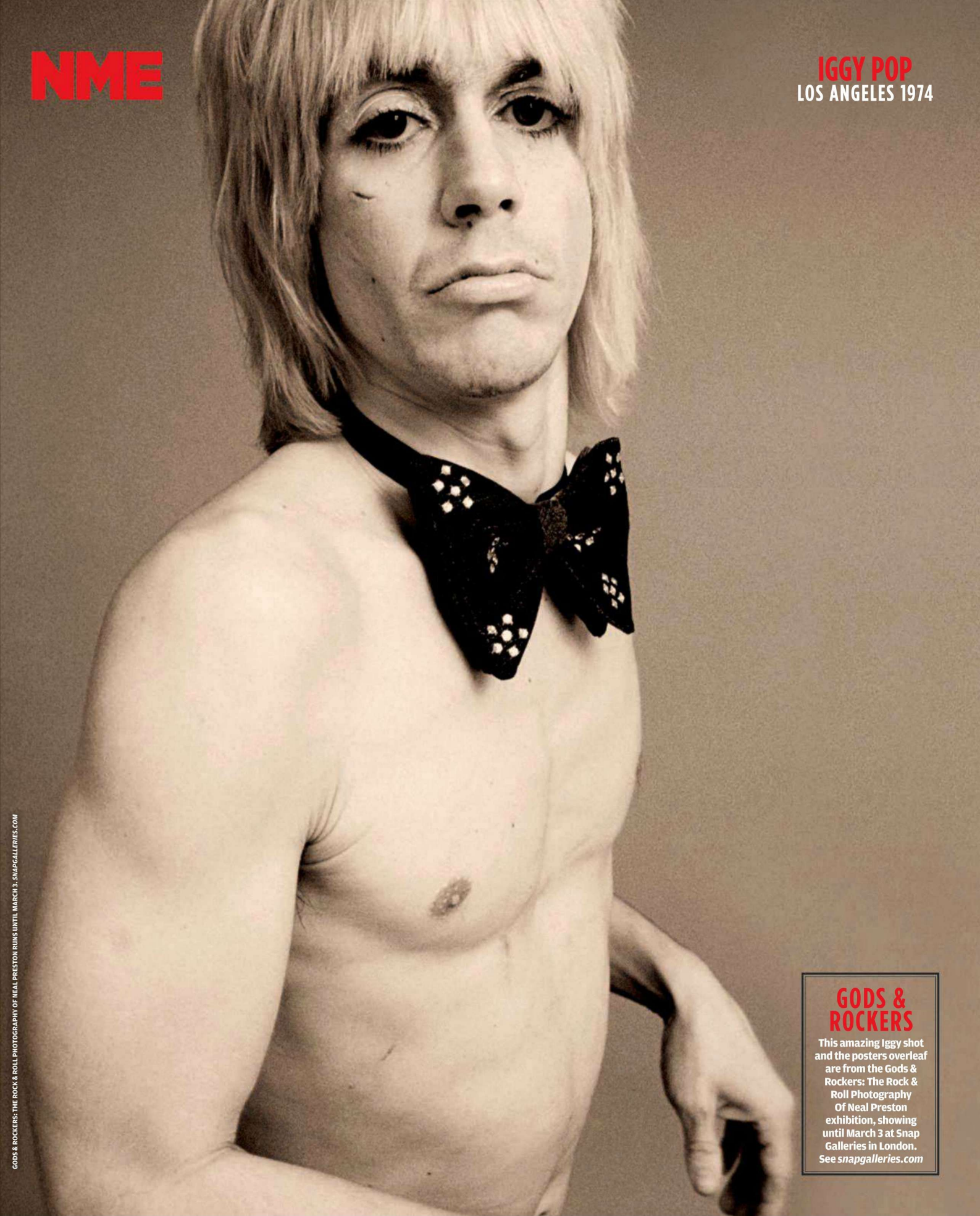
HEADPHONES AT ALL TIMES
BRENT: **"We have bitch fights constantly, so we've all learned to become very successful in the 'headphones and ignoring each other' region."**

EMBRACE TRAVELODGE PIZZAS
JORDAN: **"They are a joy. Did you know they stuff cheese into the crust?"**

EMBRACE NUDITY
FRANCE: **"If you're stuck in a van, sometimes you just need to be at one with nature."**

DEMAND WHISKEY
JORDAN: **"We'll start asking for Maker's Mark. We want some deals, bitches."**

Howl lotta love (clockwise from top): Onstage in Nottingham; the bar queue was crazy; Jordan, that had better be fake fur you're wearing; Ian goes off-menu from the whiskey-only diet; Jordan fends off a drunk fan; job done, back to the van...



IGGY POP
LOS ANGELES 1974

GODS & ROCKERS

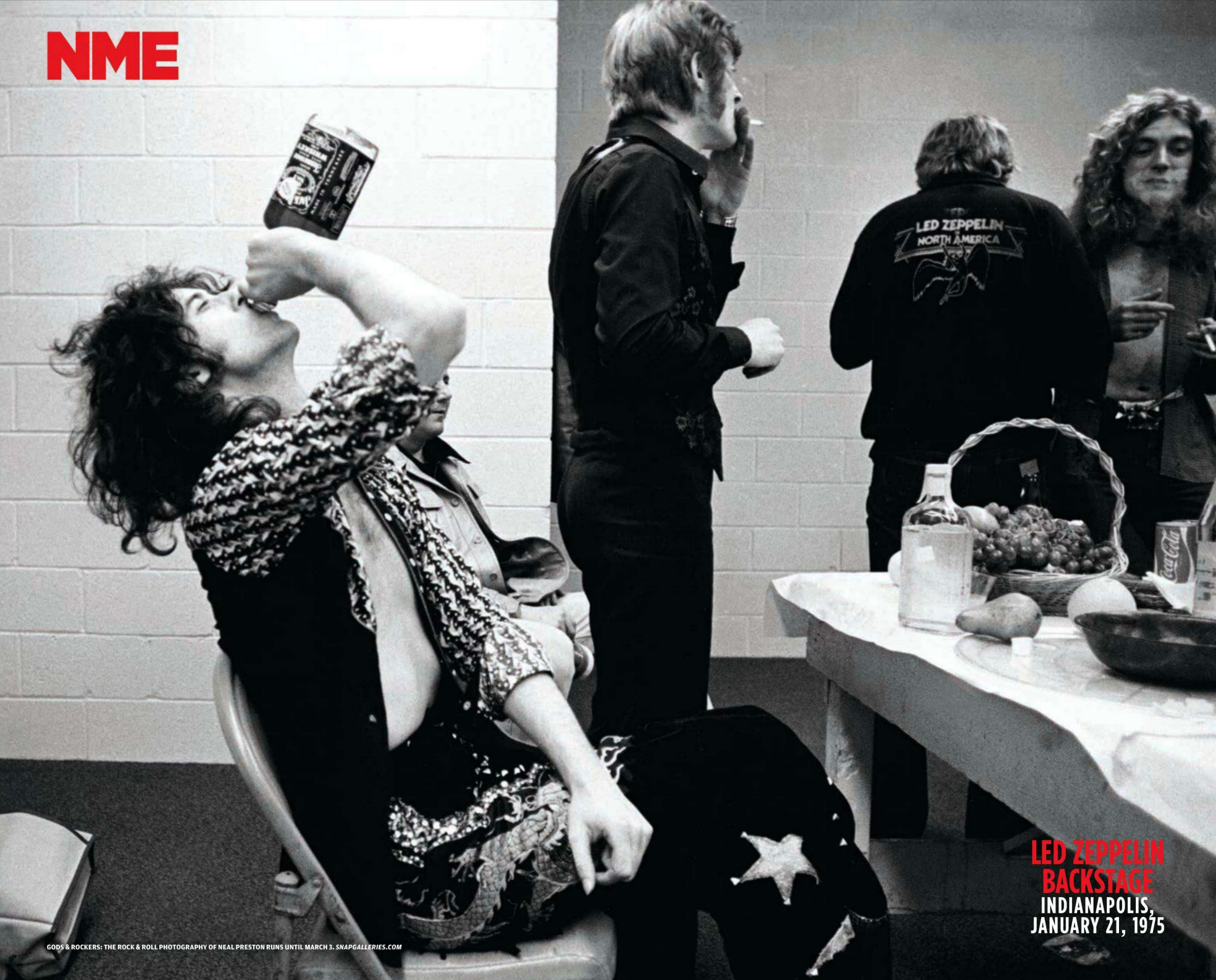
This amazing Iggy shot and the posters overleaf are from the Gods & Rockers: The Rock & Roll Photography Of Neal Preston exhibition, showing until March 3 at Snap Galleries in London. See *snapgalleries.com*

GODS & ROCKERS: THE ROCK & ROLL PHOTOGRAPHY OF NEAL PRESTON RUNS UNTIL MARCH 3. *SNAPGALLERIES.COM*

LED ZEPPELIN
1970 TO 1977

NME

GODS & ROCKERS: THE ROCK & ROLL PHOTOGRAPHY OF NEAL PRESTON RUNS UNTIL MARCH 3. *SNAPGALLERIES.COM*



LED ZEPPELIN BACKSTAGE

INDIANAPOLIS, JANUARY 21, 1975

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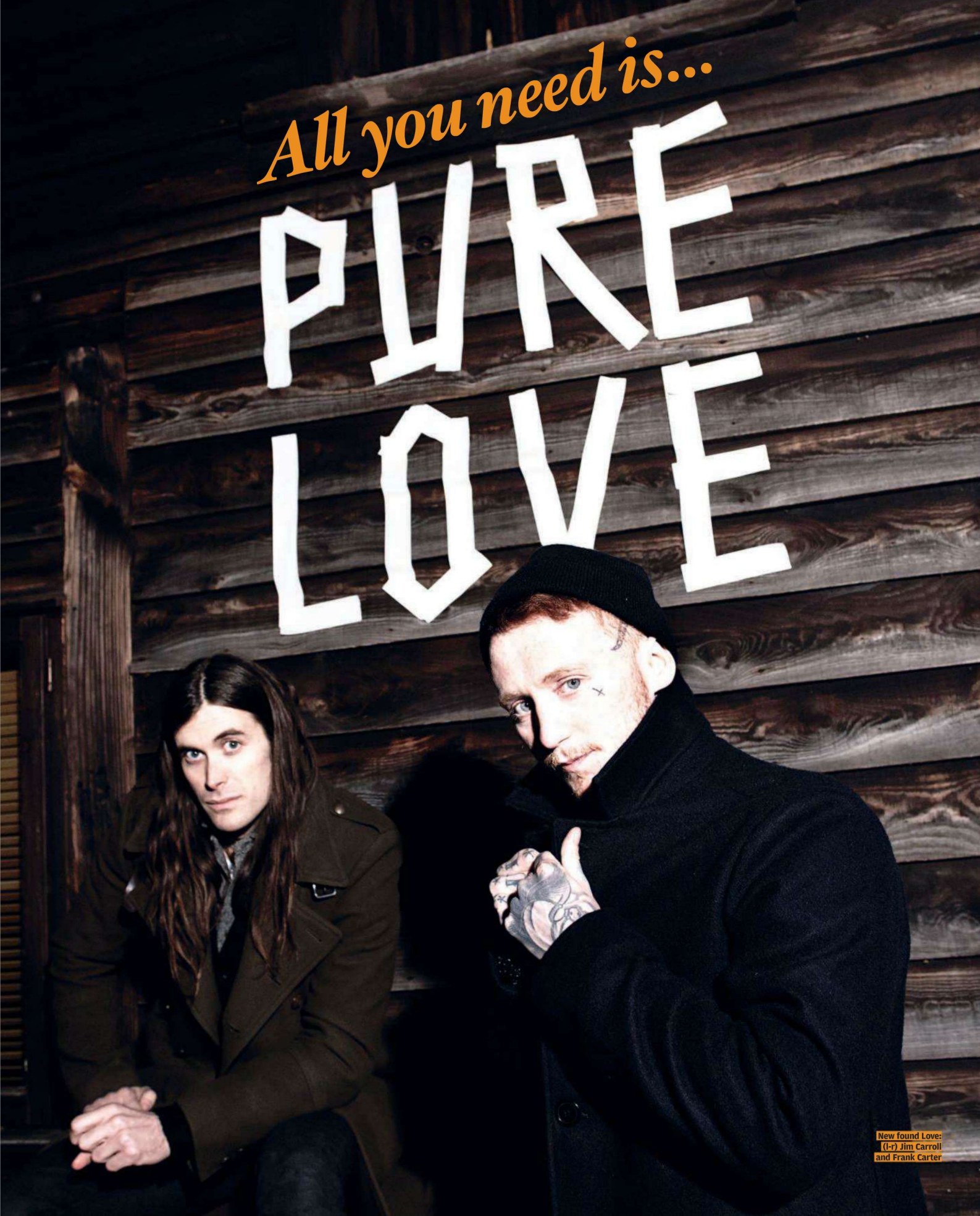
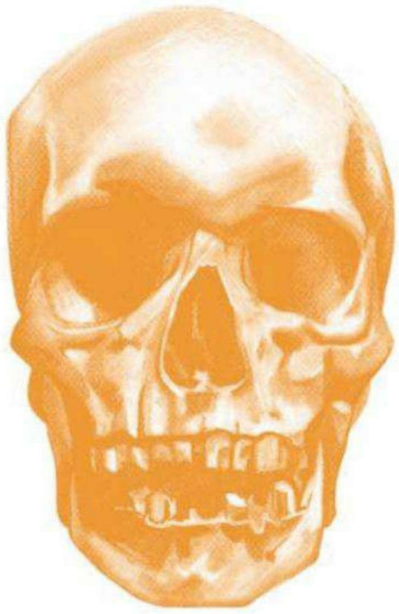


New found Love: (l-r) Jim Carroll and Frank Carter



He's free from Gallows and ready to unleash his new band – but has rock's fiercest frontman Frank Carter gone soft? He tells **Dan Martin** *why he's "hopelessly romantic" and aiming for the pop charts*

PHOTOS: DAVID EDWARDS

Sometimes, suspense is everything. Which is just as well when you're going to meet a band it's pretty much impossible to do any research on. So little is known about Pure Love, the new project from former Gallows frontman Frank Carter, plus fellow hardcore refugee Jim Carroll, late of bands Clouds and The Hope Conspiracy, that it had been suggested online that the man who once implored the world in song to "*Live by the sword, die for the Lord, call down the vultures to dine on the corpse*" may have 'gone ambient'.

So, travelling to a remote live-in Henley studio on the furthest outposts of London, walking down its pitch-black path only adds to the night's sense of gravitas. And once inside, there's little time for pleasantries with the duo, their hired-in pack of garrulous bandmates, and super-producer Gil Norton before we're ushered into a studio from which Frank promptly scarpers while we listen.

This is the first time anyone outside the inner circle has heard a note of Pure Love's music. We are played three songs: 'Beach Of Diamonds', 'Heavy Kind Of Chain' and 'The Handsome Devils Club'. And we are shaken to the core. The music is very probably brilliant: vast and melodic emotional rock songs shot through with the heart of Bruce Springsteen, the energetic spirit of The Gaslight Anthem, like The Clash at their most sleek and Queens Of The Stone Age at their most lubricated. It's unfailingly obvious why Vertigo Records, part of label giants Universal, signed them on the strength of three demos.

So we settle down with Frank, a man not without a reputation for brittleness, and find him more serene than we can ever remember, ensconced in a very certain bromance with Jim, an affable, earnest 30-year-old Brooklynite longhair. He *looks* like the Frank we remember from Gallows – those tattoos don't wash off in the shower. And yet he is not. "I was bored out there, you know," he remembers, "and I just wanted to play music because nothing was happening. And on the first night, Jim was like, 'I don't really wanna play heavy music anymore'. And I was like, 'Thank fuck, neither do I.'"

***NME:* So why the about turn, from both of you?**

Frank: "It had just run its course, really."

Jim: "I really enjoy playing heavy music but I'd been doing it since I was, like, 16 years old. I've played in other bands as well but... it can be kind of *painful* as you get older to be play that music and... if you're not energetic you're not doing it right. And that hurts as you get older."

So was this the direction you were both heading to naturally?

Frank: "It just came from the songs, really. I'd written a lot of lyrics, lots of weird stuff. Last year and the years before were rough for me, and for Jimmy too, just a bad year, and I'd been writing about love and sex and death and life... all the interesting subjects. I hooked up with Jimmy and he just had all these songs. You'd get a day where there'd be eight songs in my email, and out of those eight, five were great, and I'd just hear a melody straight away. That's the difference, this band is *easy*. This band is so... easy."

"FUCK IT, I HAVE NO PROBLEM BEING IN A POP GROUP"
Frank Carter

The revelation that the band is 'easy' would imply that Frank's previous band was not. Except we know that already. He left Gallows in August last year after a period of spluttering inactivity typified by half-hearted shows and very little work getting done to follow up their very own Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle, in which they took the money, made the nihilistic hulk that was 'Grey Britain', and ran. A barely amicable split saw Frank admit from the off that he "hadn't been happy for a long time". The remaining members gave some vague interviews about Frank wanting to turn the band into Queens Of The Stone Age, and how that wasn't fair on those who were perfectly happy with the hardcore.

***NME*: So what went wrong?**

Frank: "I don't think anything had necessarily gone *wrong*. They're still going, so clearly something is still right there. But it just wasn't right for me. I hadn't been happy for the longest time. It's always difficult, because my brother's in the band, and my brother and I had a different rapport than me and the rest of the dudes had, so it was always quite hard. And just a lack of communication really, and different directions. I *did* want something very different from our next record than them, and we just couldn't really gel on what to do going forward. We got to a point where I just thought, 'Well, the best thing for me to do really is to leave, and for real this time. And you guys, if you love these songs, which I don't, then you should take them and work on something different.'"

You were still committed to a month of touring though...

Frank: "That tour was really difficult, you know. There was a fair bit of animosity there and a lot of frustration on their part. And I understand that. But we're all still alive and we all survived it and they're ▸

Frank promotes his new band (while still with his old band...)

still playing shows. It's the right thing for everyone. I don't know what changed. I don't know what went wrong... everything went right, I think."

You've been replaced by Wade MacNeil, formerly of Canadian hardcore types Alexisonfire. What's your take on him being, essentially, the new 'you'?
Frank: "I wish them all the fucking luck in the world. I've known Wade a long time, we've been on tours together. I'm glad he's doing it. I always wanted one of my friends to take that spot because it would have been weird if I *didn't* know them. I've seen them play since, so it's not a weird thing. I just know the songs a bit better than everyone else."

"THERE WAS A FAIR BIT OF ANIMOSITY IN GALLOWS"
Frank Carter

By the time of the Gallows shows, Frank had moved to Brooklyn and had already started working on the secret project with Jim, having made acquaintance years before ("I remember seeing him through the smoke, like, 'Who's that tall, handsome man?'"). The band already named, Frank wore a Pure Love T-shirt all through the final Gallows tour (which can't have gone down well), and so when he did finally leave they were ready to start teasing the fanbase. And teasing was always the point.

"We always wanted that," nods Frank. "No bands are mysterious any more. It's all so accessible and I hate that. People don't *deserve* that."

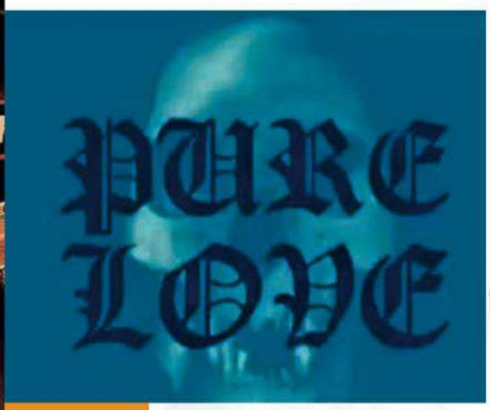
Domain name registered, they foxed people by putting a 40-second ambient demo on the Pure Love website, leading to online hysteria that Frank and Jim had gone the way of The Orb.

***NME*: Were you trying to dupe people with that clip on your website?**
Frank: "That was our intro music! That was always the plan, Jim was like, 'I've made this sick thing' and I'm like, 'Great, that's our intro music.' We were thinking, 'We're gonna shoot a little bit of video this week and put that as a soundtrack and then when we walk out onto that music and everyone will be like, 'Oh, it's their fucking intro music.' All those people that commented, 'This is *definitely* their single'... 40 fucking seconds of just noise! Jesus, calm down. And everyone's getting all het up about it being electronic and ambient."
Jim: "It's five guitar tracks and five vocal tracks. What's electronic about that, aside from the fact it's an electric guitar?"

Next came the T-shirts, apparently available online a year before any music was coming out. A little cheeky, no?
Frank: "We didn't sell any. My mate Raz bought one and I took them down because I hated going to the post office, that one time, I was like, 'Fuck this, I'm never doing this again.'"
Jim: "We only made 50 of them or something. They're actually still on the site, you just can't buy them. We gave them to friends, I gave one to my mum, she's been wearing it around. It did the job because you're asking questions about them. We'll have the show and I'm sure the songs will get out there from the show, and the record will be done by March. People will just have to calm down a little bit and be patient."

You're like *The Dark Knight Rises*.
Frank: "Exactly, we are the [Batman enemy] Bane of the pop world."
Jim: "And we're gonna snap Batman's spine."

JOE WATSON, RICHARD JOHNSON, DANNY NORTH



Clockwise from top left: Jim's The Hope Conspiracy at The Joiners Arms; Pure Love's enigmatic site; the equally mysterious first press shot; the masks come off; Frank fronts Gallows in '09

Frank TALK

Mr Carter's finest quotes throughout the years

ON MODESTY

"We've [Gallows] always been about substance over style. And we're a very stylish band anyway, so the substance has to equate to the same."

ON LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

"I don't even think there is a solution. Everything is falling apart. The world is fucked. We're at the beginning of the end of humanity."

ON GALLOWS' 'GREY BRITAIN' ARTWORK

"I didn't set out specifically to offend anyone [with the original, gruesome artwork that was vetoed], I just wanted to create something that I thought was pretty thought-provoking and pretty disgusting to look at. I wanted something that was fairly offensive, but I didn't want to upset any specific group, I wanted to upset everyone."

ON BEING TOP OF THE NME COOL 2007 LIST

"I've gotta get a 'Fuck the *NME*' tattoo. I did say if they put me at Number One I'd get it done, 'cos they'd probably think that was cool and that would cement my place for next year."

ON LONGEVITY

"Gallows is not my life. It's a hobby I get paid for. I'm a tattoo artist. I quit the band four times before we signed to a major label. Gallows won't last five years."

What's with the name Pure Love?
Frank: "I think the whole point of the name was we were very conscious of our backgrounds, and we consciously decided to write this new music which is very removed from what we've done. And Pure Love, when he mentioned it, it was perfect, you know? All the songs are about love and the repercussions of love."

And is there an outlook here? Is love presented as a positive thing?
Frank: "I think they're all positive in their own right. There's definitely some heavier songs in there, but it's just the different facets of love, all the emotions it makes you feel."

Are you romantic people?
Frank: "I am *hopelessly* romantic. Jesus, I flew to Scotland – on my own – to meet my new girlfriend's parents. That's *mental*."
Jim: "I'm romantic about things, here and there, if you catch me on the right day."
Frank: "Well, he always leaves me little notes in the studio space."
Jim: "Little chocolates left on his pillow every morning."
Frank: "It doesn't taste like chocolate."
Jim: "Well, I had to brew one up. I'm sorry."

We're visiting Pure Love after only four days in the studio. One day before this magazine comes out, Valentine's Day will see them blow their cover with their first ever show. After that, says Frank, there is no agenda "other than to write great songs and sell loads of records. It's very simple."

Yes, even citing '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?' as a throwaway but sincere influence, this band are aiming nowhere but at the mainstream's jugular. It's almost too much to take in. "Rock might not have been as popular in recent years," says Frank, "but you know what, that's definitely gonna change because we haven't released our album yet." Go Carter! "I know that's an ambitious statement that's probably gonna come back and bite me in the arse," he adds, "but when the fuck have I ever cared about that before? I want to make music that's timeless and classic."

Are they proud to carry the badge of Pop Group?

"I'm fine with that, yeah, fuck it," says Jim. "Led Zeppelin were a pop band."

Frank agrees. "Fuck yeah, so were Pink Floyd. Thin Lizzy. AC/DC. Queen. Abba. Essentially they're all rock bands but they've all got massive pop sensibilities. They're popular bands and that's what it means. I want to be a popular band. Hell yeah."

And if you think *that* sounds like a transformation, just wait 'til you hear these tunes.

REVIEWS

THE BIG OPINIONS ON THIS WEEK'S IMPORTANT RELEASES

Edited by Louis Pattison

SLEIGH BELLS

REIGN OF TERROR COLUMBIA

The duo take the dynamic, genre-smashing spirit of their first album and add heartfelt lyrics, new styles, and more ambition than ever

First came the guitar, shooting licks like laser bolts from the fingers of its wielder, Derek Miller. Then there came the voice. Sometimes it came hiding nunchucks in its pigtails. Other times, it blew strawberry-scented kisses that cut like razorblades. This was Alexis Krauss, and like a computer game heroine dropped through a trapdoor into our universe, she was here to wreak fiery havoc.

Sleigh Bells' 2010 debut, 'Treats', was bizarre in how it seemed to combine the worst parts of '00s music – crunk, nu-metal, hyphy – but embrace them wholeheartedly, without irony. It sat on the tipping point, where the bad became brilliant and unique. But where to go after such a confounding first act? What happens when the shock of the new fades? After all, there's nothing quite so clichéd as something that sounded innovative two years ago, rolled out again with the most cursory of polishes.

A first glance at the tracklisting for 'Reign Of Terror' doesn't necessarily allay these concerns, with titles like 'Road To Hell', 'DOA' and 'Demons' suggesting a Lana Del Rey duets album with Meat Loaf. But Sleigh Bells have always been much more than just surfaces, and 'Reign Of Terror' finds the duo delving further inside their sound. So, the ADD ideas factory of 'Treats' has become weightier with melody, the guitar is supersized, but the expansion has become about the experimental rather than the volume, and the lyrics are personal in a way that they weren't before. It's ambitious with a capital 'A', and 'Comeback Kid' is 'Reign Of Terror''s calling card. It's a spirited, American tale of kicking against indie pricks. Infectiously optimistic, one only has to listen to the melodic bridge of "*you'll go away, but you'll come back some day*" to see how far they've come.

But they have every right to be bullish. Because on 'Reign Of Terror''s best songs they put several different styles in motion with all the dexterity of an accomplished plate spinner. The effect is stunning, creating some hugely affecting moments out of weird genre juxtapositions. Take 'Born To Lose', on which Alexis sings a janglepop melody line about a death wish, while Derek pounds the shit out of his guitar and backing vocals curse like Alice Glass' evil twin sister angling for the knife to sink deeper. 'Road To Hell' swoons like a scarecrow in the wind to a woozy Robin Guthrie guitar effect as Alexis sings of sweet stalkerdom, undercut by the sound of gunfire and a riff you could imagine Slash playing. Equally surprising is 'You Lost Me'. A mood piece which prickles with the claustrophobia of a SALEM track, it recalls David Newman's score to *Heathers* and David Lynch, with the faint echo of 'Earth Angel' playing off a rusty old radio. The effect is jarring and wonderful. These are songs that paint strange pictures of souls split in two, and hearing their sound develop in this complex way is fascinating.

The rest of the album is filled with different sorts of surprises. 'End Of The Line' sets a Cure-like guitar figure against a lyric about failing to seize the moment and letting life slip out of your hands. "*It's the end/Of the line/So goodbye*", Alexis sings in a breathy, resigned vocal. At the other extreme, 'Demons' sounds like the theme song to a schlocky '80s horror film, but the charm of the lo-fi production and the chorus ("*Demons! Live! On!*") make it work.

'Reign Of Terror' is aptly named. The way they've leapfrogged their contemporaries in terms of ambition and scope *is* terrifying. Sleigh Bells are, once again, in a league of their own. ***Priya Elan***

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Born To Lose', 'Road To Hell', 'You Lost Me'

TOM OKLEY

Read all NME's album reviews and rate the LPs yourselves at NME.COM/reviews

THIS IS HARDSCORE
what our numbers add up to

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not-even-funny bad	Barely one saving grace	Actively terrible	Woefully bad or lazy	Depressingly substandard	Dead-on average	Better than average	Really good	Exceptionally good	Of-the-year good	Of-the-decade good

DODGY
STAND UPRIGHT IN A COOL PLACE STRIKEBACK

One day, Dodgy may go down as a guilty pleasure of the Britpop years – for all the amiable camper van buffoonery, the likes of 'In A Room' were deceptively savage, Who-esque minor indie-rock classics. You can't blame them for coming out of retirement in the current climate of mid-'90s nostalgia, but 'Stand Upright...', with its heavy accent on country flavours and gentle pastoralia, is an apologetic shrug back into the spotlight. Only on the thundering 'Raggedstone Hill' do they visit former glories. Sadly, it's possible to forget the rest of it while you are actually listening to it. ***Pete Cashmore*** **4**

DOWNLOAD: 'Raggedstone Hill'

DUSTIN WONG
DREAMS SAY, VIEW, CREATE, SHADOW LEADS THRILL JOCKEY

Ed Sheeran has a lot to answer for, but for now we blame him for the death of the loop pedal – a useful tool becomes naff with one flick of his child sneakers. But it's OK, because Dustin Wong is here to reclaim it. The second solo release from the guitarist from Ponytail (RIP) is constructed from loop pedal machinations, mostly using his guitar with various effects. A distant cousin to Robert Fripp's flowing, surging Frippertronics, 'Dreams...' is coarser, staccato riffs stuttering into infinity. The tracks have separate names but they're really just one whole impressive piece, about as far from Sheeran as you can get. ***Tom Pinnock*** **7**

DOWNLOAD: 'Sprinkle Wet Toes'

DIE ANTWOORD
TEN$ION ZEF RECORDZ/DOWNTOWN

Before the entire internet took to prodding at Lizzy Grant's lips, it was quacking on about the supposed inauthenticity of South Africa's Die Antwoord, whose schtick – a sort of white-trash 2 Unlimited with home-administered tattoos – might have been, *gasp*, slightly contrived (you'd have thought the playsuit stitched out of rats might have been a clue). There remains something viscerally appealing about the likes of 'I Fink U Freaky', merciless fairground techno peppered with machine-gun Afrikaans rapping, but as an album it feels a little short on hooks, falling back on some rather lunk-headed Diplo-meets-dubstep production tricks. ***Louis Pattison*** **6**

DOWNLOAD: 'I Fink U Freaky'

SCUBA
PERSONALITY HOTFLUSH

Dubstep's ambassador to Berlin, Paul 'Scuba' Rose is a living interface between UK bass music and Berghain's austere dub-techno. 'Personality', his third album, conforms to type, while confounding expectation. Less moody than you might expect (if nowhere near as fluffy as his controversial 2011 banger, 'Adrenalin'), it reverberates with '80s electro, '90s house and post-dubstep's purple synths, but within a sonic framework that evokes everything from monastic purity to claustrophobic intensity. This is dancefloor ecstasy as a brutal, serious business. Which is exhilarating, even if, 'Personality' lacks the emotional complexity of closer 'If U Want'. ***Tony Naylor*** **7**

DOWNLOAD: 'The Hope'

Faces To Names... What the reviewers are doing this week

PRIYA ELAN
"I spent most of this week watching the end of *The Killing*, reading bits of *Chavs: The Demonization Of The Working Class* and *The Picture Of Dorian Gray*, listening to Trust and generally just being really, really cold all the time."

ANNE T DONAHUE
"I celebrated my first year in Toronto this week, so I'm eating cake for breakfast and McDonald's for everything else. I also launched a podcast with my best friend that will finally expose us for the normies the we are."

LOUIS PATTISON
"I saw Wild Flag, watched series one of *Limmy's Show* on DVD, and introduced my puppy, Steve, to the concept of snow. He is, thankfully, a fan."

PERFUME GENIUS
PUT YOUR BACK N 2 IT ORGANS/TURNSTILE

Mike Hadreas remains a tortured soul, but on this second effort he's feeling his way towards salvation

When Mike Hadreas crawled under his bedsheets at his mother's house in Everett, Washington a few years back, something clicked. Feeling at the end of his rope after a dark period spent messing with drink and drugs in Seattle, Hadreas had gone home to regroup, and quickly found himself writing the spare, wracked confessionals that wound up on 'Learning', his 2010 debut under the moniker Perfume Genius.

A remarkable effort it was, too. Dealing with topics of addiction, abuse, and the author's wrestle with his own sexuality, 'Learning', like a crash mat at the bottom of a seven-story drop, offered comfort in the unlikeliest of places. But great as the first record was, even fans had to admit that 'Learning' walked a fine line, artistically speaking. After all, too much reverence can be a chore, as anyone who's lost feeling in their bum cheeks through Terrence Malick's *The Tree Of Life* will tell you.

Can Perfume Genius pull it off twice? 'Put Your Back N 2 It' certainly opens in familiar fashion, 'Awol Marine''s wrenching, minor-chord piano stabs paired with an arrangement that's as starkly unadorned as its author's whippet frame. If it sounds slightly in danger of lapsing into Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* weepie 'Memory' at any moment, we're going to let that one slide.

'Normal Song''s hymnal waltz recalls Conor Oberst minus the whiny psychobabble, while 'No Tear' continues in a torchy, keep-on-keepin'-on type vein, like Antony Hegarty on a vaguely gospel tip. '17' cleaves towards the darker edges of Hadreas' repertoire, but a peculiar lyric ("*String it up on a fence/Cover it up with semen/I am done, I am done with it*") can't dispel a slight feeling of déjà vu at this point.

'Dirge' has something of 'Spirit Of Eden'-era Talk Talk's prayerful feel, but it's 'Dark Parts' that feels like a minor breakthrough, Hadreas letting a powerfully swelling arrangement take some of the emotional weight: "*The hands of God were bigger than grandpa's eyes/But still he broke the elastic on your waist/But he'll never break you, baby*".

'Hood' offers a similarly fleshed-out arrangement, with a moderately rousing middle-eight that echoes Hadreas' sexy/unnerving confession that he's "*ticking like a bomb*". That the promo clip for 'All Waters' was pulled by YouTube for featuring two topless men hugging is ironic given the lyrics, as Hadreas ponders a world in which he can hold his lover's hand in the street without feeling self-conscious. Not this world, evidently.

'Floating Spit' beats a partial retreat to 'Learning''s chillier climes, but it's the closing, trad-sounding 'Sister Song' that reflects the album's shift towards a more positive outlook. At times you might find yourself wondering what happened to the Mike Hadreas who dared to dream that even paedophile teachers might have guardian spirits watching over them. But really, that troubled kid never went away. It's just that this time, he's more concerned with reaching towards the light. ***Alex Denney*** **8**

DOWNLOAD: 'Dark Parts', 'Normal Song', 'All Waters'

BAND OF SKULLS

SWEET SOUR ELECTRIC BLUES RECORDINGS/PSYCOLLECTIVE

The blues-rockers' second effort can't quite match their sweatily awesome live shows – but then, what could?

Like jeans, mashed potato and sex, the brand of hard-worn Britrock peddled by this south coast trio never has, and never will, fall in or out of fashion. On the Monday after the endtimes, rest assured that the racks at your local indie store will be plentifully stocked with albums just like 'Sweet Sour'. And therein lies Band Of Skulls' curse *and* blessing. The very fabric of Britain's toilet circuit is built on lank-haired US-facing sweat-rock like theirs – but sadly, you'd be better off in the maelstrom of one of their live shows than taking this album home. They just work better that way.

Yet inevitably, for all that's impressive about their second album, it's much like going on Nemesis at Alton Towers for the 100th time – you already know its every thrilling twist and turn. Just hear the way the crunching QOTSA riffs of 'Bruises' segue into the pared-down torch-song rock of 'Wanderluster', the type of pace change that's been heard on every blues-rock album this side of the genre's early '00s purple patch. Or check out the age-old loud-quiet dynamic deployed on the title track. Even a cursory glance at the song titles – from 'The Devil Takes Care Of His Own' to 'You're Not Pretty But You Got It Goin' On' – is like digging into blues-rock's most ancient scrolls. Only on the latter of these tracks do Band Of Skulls truly hit their musical stride, going for folksy subtlety over bombast, allowing co-vocalist Emma Richardson's coos truly to take centrestage away from the album's heavier moments.

Ultimately, from start to finish, you know what you've ordered: proficient, precision-executed blues-rock with few genuine surprises. Which, while hardly a ringing endorsement, has worked to spectacular effect for The Black Keys over the past decade. See you down the front at Ally Pally in 2020, then. ***Rick Martin***

6

DOWNLOAD: 'Bruises', 'Lay My Head Down', 'You're Not Pretty But You Got It Goin' On'

SOKO

I THOUGHT I WAS AN ALIEN BECAUSE

Imagine if 'twee' wasn't insufferable, that sunshine and tra-la-las could co-exist with articulate thought. Wouldn't it be magical? Wouldn't it just be... pop? Soko started recording in her bedroom, just a girl with an acoustic guitar and GarageBand. But her debut album, recorded with Elliott Smith collaborator Fritz Michaud, looks beyond such puppy-eyed whining. The likes of 'For Marion' and 'I Just Want To Make New With You' have a knack for making sadness sound sweet, and sweetness sad; and while there are clichés here that love songs struggle to escape from, 'I Thought I Was An Alien' dumps twee cold and hard, running into pop's warm embrace. ***Anne T Donahue***

7

DOWNLOAD: 'I Thought I Was An Alien'

YOUNG MAGIC

MELT CARPARK RECORDS

New Zealand's The Ruby Suns did the whole everything-plus-the-kitchen-sink tropical-pop thing before most of Brooklyn. And if not before, then they certainly did it better. In lieu of anything new from them, this debut by their kindred spirits (two Australians and an Indonesian) will do nicely. If possible, Young Magic are even more dizzyingly chaotic. They melt and warp and distort their ritual percussion, global melodies and swirl of ghostly harmonies into the kind of synapse-frying charge that's legendary in places like LA lo-fi hangout The Smell, while their Brainfeeder bleeps and beats cast a skittering shadow over this slippery psych-pop. ***Chris Parkin***

8

DOWNLOAD: 'Night In The Ocean'

The Rider

What we're wearing, reading and remembering this week

Clothing

Henri Lloyd Milano RWR Jacket

In case you hadn't noticed, it's deathly cold outside – so this slimline mac is just the ticket for a frosty February.

Book

From Heaven To Heaven: New Order Live

From '81–'84, snapper Dec Hickey joined New Order on tour, armed with a camera and tape machine. In this book, he presents a portrait of a band who'd closed their doors to the press.

Reissues

Pulp: Fire Collection

You know the hits – but what about Pulp's first three albums, released to much quieter fanfare in the years before they became Britpop gods? Fire Records reissue 'It' (1983), 'Freaks' (1987) and 'Separations' (1992).

THIS WEEK'S SINGLES

reviewed by NME's **EMILY MACKAY**

PORCELAIN RAFT

UNLESS YOU SPEAK FROM YOUR HEART

SECRETLY CANADIAN

The haunted disco space Mauro Remiddi inhabits (two lots down from The Weeknd and just round the corner from Atlas Sound) has a clear 'NO MESSIN'' sign on its door. "*I don't want to listen unless you speak with your heart*", he informs us in strident, glossy falsetto. You get the feeling he'd be a really annoying boyfriend to argue with.

FLASH FIKTION

STARRY GLOW SPLIT

Christ, I thought we'd got over everyone wanting to sound like Vampire Weekend. If the itchy-toed rhythms and big synth-soaring choruses are all in place, though, this lot's brain-dead electro-indie is closer to The Wombats than anything else. "*When everything surrounds me... I look down at the streets below, get lost in a starry glow*", muses singer Matt Rokk. No, Matt, UP. The stars are up. Sheesh.

KING CHARLES

LOVEBLOOD ISLAND

This extravagantly dreaded, Cavalier-moustached, trustafarian-tastic pillock is so ridiculous it's almost impossible to hate him, and this Jamie T/Jack Peñate-like bit of skank-pop is bright and exuberant enough to make you thoroughly hate yourself instead. He's like a reggae-indie Adam Ant. Well, he reckons.

NIK COLK VOID

GOLD E OGENESIS

Ah, finally, someone that's not pissing about. Factory Floor's sonic sculptress Nik, when left to her own devices, deals in the sort of abrasive, art-noise sounds that could do your soul serious damage. It's like listening to pirate radio broadcasting from the space-hell-dimension in *Event Horizon*. You definitely don't need eyes where this woman's going.

DEVIN

YOU'RE MINE FRENCHKISS

Like a favourite leather jacket, a good old Richard Hell/Modern Lovers-style clattering rock'n'roll racket never gets old, just softer and seedier. "*Baby, c'mon, there ain't much worth saving...*" bawls Devin Therriault, accurately, but you know that when the rock'n'roll house burns to the ground in suspicious circumstances, this quiff-topped, weird-faced young hobbledehoy will grab all the right things off the nightstand and shimmy down the drainpipe to safety.

TASHAKI MIYAKI

SINGS THE EVERLY BROTHERS FOR US

The last word in David Lynch, dreamworld, creeped-out, slowed-down, reverb-laden, girl-group, faintly twisted and haunted '50s Americana. I loved *Blue Velvet* as well, and yes, Lesley Gore is great, but really, that's enough now. We could all take an Everly Brothers song and sing it like a smacked-out tosser.

STEVE GULLICK

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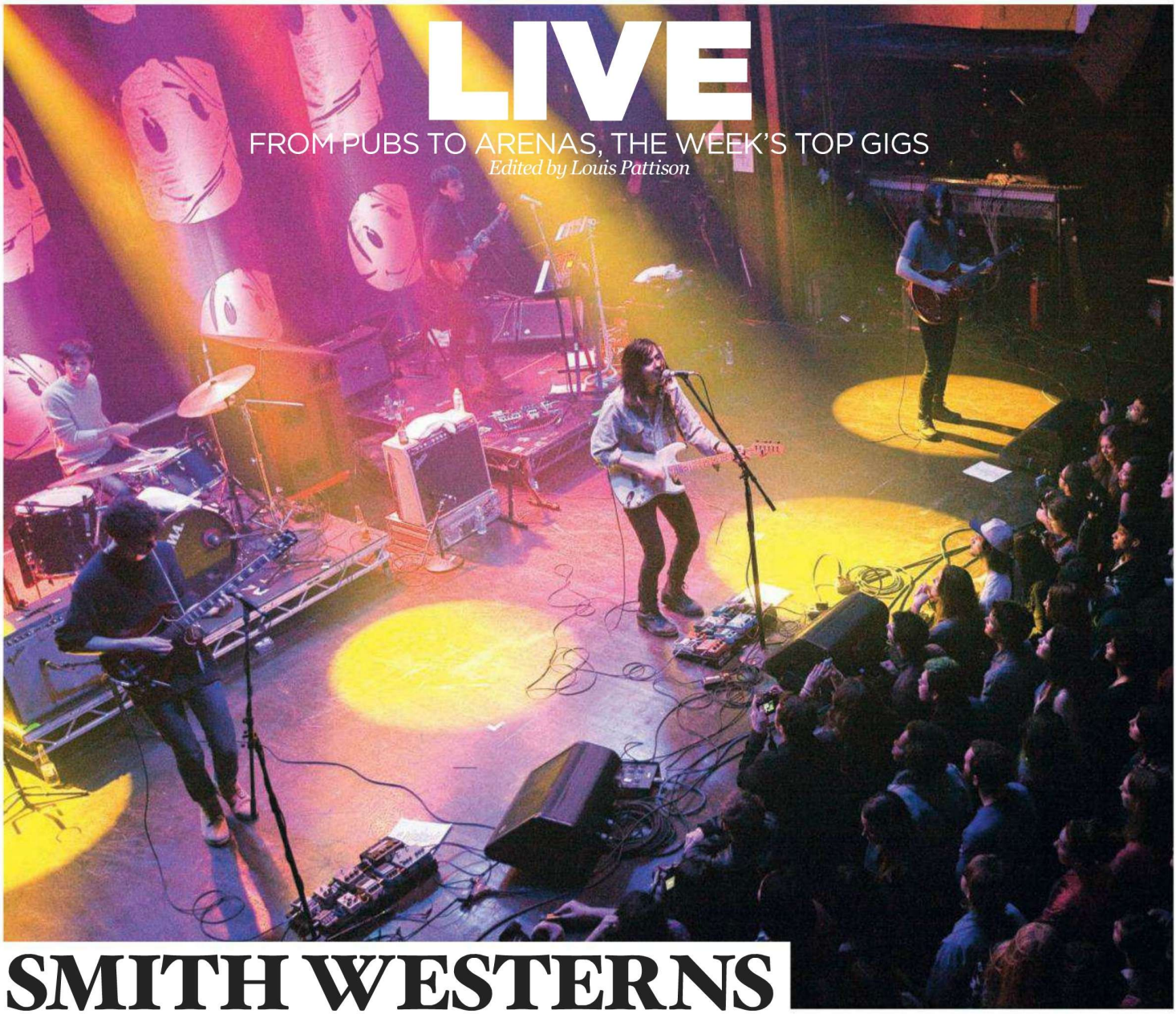
FROM PUBS TO ARENAS, THE WEEK'S TOP GIGS

Edited by Louis Pattison



SMITH WESTERNS

WEBSTER HALL, NEW YORK TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

It's smiley faces all round as NYC welcomes the garage rockers back for a show that's louder, buzzier and bouncier than ever – and with a pair of new songs to hint at what's to come

In one of the more interesting double bills of the year, Webster Hall has two shows tonight. The first: baby-faced Chicago trio Smith Westerns. The second: Skrillex. Even for a band who have supported more big names than you can count on one hand, and despite frontman Cullen Omori joking before the show that Skrillex is playing their afterparty, it feels like something of an odd combo. Tonight is the Westerns' first headline show in New York since the release of second album 'Dye It Blonde' a year ago, after a hectic few months opening for everyone from Arctic Monkeys to MGMT to Wilco.

"There's a lot of history in this building," Cullen tells the crowd. "This is the first venue we played in New York!" Ah yes, the 2009 show with Los Campesinos!, when the band weren't even old enough to buy a drink. Three years and a few beers down the line, the trio have amped up their live gigs. Tonight there are five in the band, set against a backdrop of yellow smileys.

In front, Cullen spins and slides around the stage like a drunken puppy, blowing kisses and pushing a curtain of shiny black hair from his face. The big, clean pop riffs of second album highlights 'End Of The Night' and 'All Die Young' are gloriously rough around the edges under Webster Hall's blue lights. By contrast, fuzzy garage anthem 'Dreams', from their first album, sounds fresh without the constant buzz of that record's lo-fi production.

> *"This is the first venue we ever played in New York"*
>
> CULLEN OMORI

There are new songs too – a sign that Smith Westerns are well on the way to putting together album number three. The two unnamed demos promise more Hammond, guitar solos and huge choruses. "*You're my star,*" Cullen and guitarist Max Kakacek both sing in the second demo, as the audience bounce into one another on the floor.

Afterwards, Smith Western fans leave (girls in floral, boys in silver earrings), passing an entirely different crowd queuing for the next show. Maybe backstage, Cullen is drinking a beer and preparing to pop his dubstep cherry. Now that would be a new direction. ***Hazel Sheffield***

GUY EPPEL

BETH JEANS HOUGHTON

RELENTLESS GARAGE, LONDON

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Upstairs in Highbury, a magical world is opened

Beth Jeans Houghton cut an unusual proposition from the start. Four years since she was first feted as a child ingénue, her album has finally grown to size, and at the front of her burly/cute band The Hooves Of Destiny, she now emerges with the presence of a folk-rock Elizabeth Taylor. Certainly the stern-faced folk males in the audience who hush when you cough would more suit the receiving of a hallowed priestess, not a buzz performance from an artist on their first album upstairs at the Garage.

The whole thing feels so curious, it barely even registers that this girl from Newcastle is going out with Anthony Kiedis from Red Hot Chili Peppers. But from the spectral shower she and the Hooves conjure up as soon as they drift into the pretty 'Atlas', they carry their own sense of stature with supreme confidence. Houghton invites you into a world of her own making, a sort of Florence In Wonderland, and when the show looks like collapsing under its own banter, they seem perfectly happy.

But it's impossible to deny the magic that unfolds once they do stop dicking about – Beth's commanding, fairytale vocals sound spellbinding on the skittish dreamscape of 'Dodecahedron', the cantering 'Liliputt', and galloping finale 'Sweet Tooth Bird'. Beth and the Hooves don't quite convince they've got enough about them to take this world by force yet, but just a glimpse through their portal proves their own world is a magical place to visit. ***Dan Martin***

RICHARD JOHNSON, DAN DENNISON

TIM HECKER

ST GILES IN THE FIELDS, LONDON

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

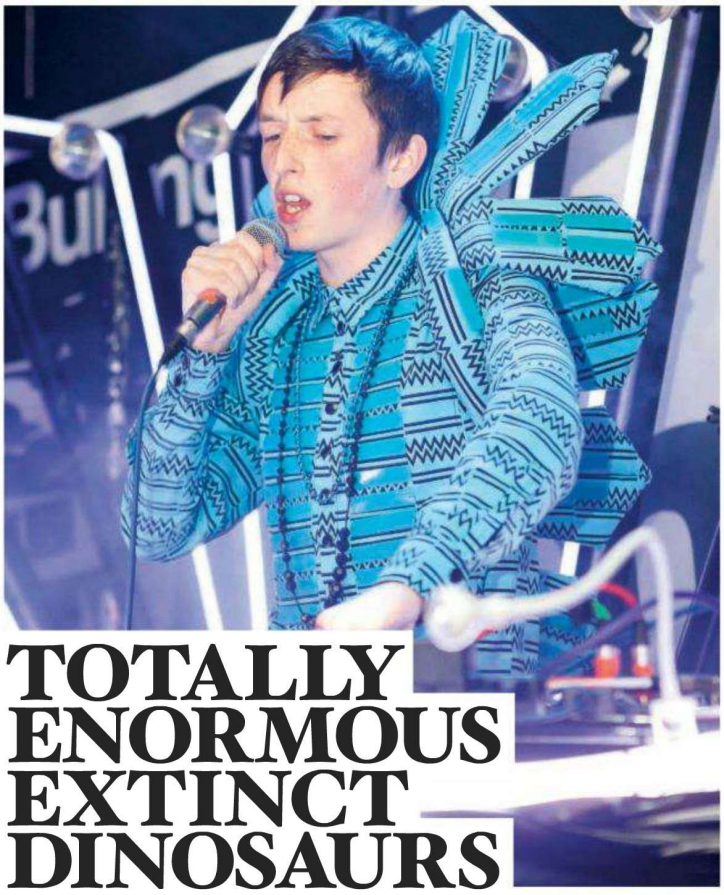
Sunken somewhere within the inky gloom of St Giles In The Fields church lurks Tim Hecker. The only illumination is evening light through stained glass windows but hovering in the shadows suits both Hecker and his magnificent 'Ravedeath, 1972', given new life tonight through the church's organ. His compositions seem to suck up and mangle the faded ecclesial glamour of the old house of worship, giving birth to a monolithic wall of noise that veers from haunted-house wailings to fist-in-mouth tidal waves of delightful drone. Truly, one of the finest sermons this blessed building is likely to have ever witnessed. ***Ben Hewitt***

LIANNE LA HAVAS

THE SOCIAL, LONDON

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

Like the wholesome antithesis of Anna Calvi's fearsome, scarlet woman stalk, Lianne La Havas deals in heartbroken laments, but with the glass firmly half-full. Armed with an electric guitar and genuinely stirring, soulful vocal, the likes of 'Don't Wake Me Up' or 'Forget' – a ballsier change in tone and easy highlight – provide gentle thrills, the rammed basement respectfully silent throughout. The mood does remain a little sedate, though, and it's a shame that La Havas' habit of introducing each song in painfully explicit detail strips away any semblance of mystique. ***Lisa Wright***



TOTALLY ENORMOUS EXTINCT DINOSAURS

BULLINGDON ARMS, OXFORD FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

Euphoric rave, junglist nods and one daft outfit

You've got to admire Orlando Higginbottom for sticking to his guns. He's surely aware by now that his nom de rave is so cumbersome and cutesy that people are embarrassed to say it out loud, instead referring to his act by its equally ugly acronym TEED. But rather than shorten or change the name, he's chosen to play up the dinosaur theme by stubbornly stitching himself in an extravagant scaly-green stegosaurus number that precludes any possibility of a mid-set loo break.

Frankly he looks a bit uncomfortable, like the host of a fancy dress party who's bitterly determined to keep his costume on despite the fact that none of his guests have made the effort. Yet it's this faint sense of pathos that prevents his whole dinosaur conceit from coming across as childish or wacky. Orlando's music might crackle and fizz with Friday night abandon, but his vocals are appealingly world-weary and forlorn. He's the one-man Metronomy, the anti-Example, alone on the dancefloor, baffling the laydeez with his duff chat-up lines ("*Give me a shot/'Cos I could be/The dog to your bone/Or something*"). At times it almost feels like he's deliberately pissing on his own fireworks, but every time his set threatens to become moody or introspective, he drops a trusty rave grenade like 'Waulking Song' or 'Bournemouth' fires off his confetti cannons and ushers his two dancers onto the stage to reignite the room.

TEED's yearning melodies are offset by thick acid squelches and brisk drum patterns influenced by two-step, UK funk and even early '90s jungle. The notion of the son of an Oxford professor declaring affinity with the junglist massive is fraught with potential embarrassment, but raucous set-closers 'Carnival' and 'Blood Pressure' are informed, affectionate tributes to the UK's rave heritage.

Sensitive yet tough, its euphoria tinged with awkwardness, TEED's music makes an obvious connection with its wide-eyed audience. Maybe Orlando's destiny will be to send laddish, lairy, emotionally stunted bass music the way of the dinosaur. ***Sam Richards***

View From The Crowd

Leah, 23 and Giacomo, 22, Oxford

"It was really lively, really fun! We enjoyed the synchronised dancing – the dancers were brilliant, and the decorative headwear was a nice touch. We were thoroughly entertained."

AZARI & III

HEAVEN, LONDON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Filthy, fabulous and downright f... f... f... freezing, the sexy foursome realise dreams of disco utopia

Dressing appropriately for the sensual glam extravaganza that is an Azari & III concert would be difficult at the best of times. On a bitter night in the depths of winter, it's nigh-on impossible. Ideally, the thousand or so of us packed into London's Heaven nightclub would be naked save for the odd item of latex or leather, and sprayed with a fine mist of rare olive oil as we get down. It being below freezing outside, the cloakroom does a roaring trade even as Azari & III steadily and surely ramp up the temperature.

It's a rare thing indeed when you witness a performance that gets the crowd dancing up a storm (to 'Manhooker') before all the members are even on the stage. Producers Dinamo Azari and Alexinder III stand anonymously at the back, one thwacking electronic drums, the other behind a massive bank of machines. When fabulous singers Fritz and Cedric finally emerge, the former is sporting a huge, glittering medallion, the latter leopard skin tights and tasselled green earrings about a metre long. There's a stupendous pace to Azari & III's performance. Single 'Hungry For The Power' is tossed off second, and massive sub-bass forms the glue that binds the fine synth lines and joyous camp vocals. You can almost see everyone's useless British reserve disappearing like steam from sweaty forms, up into the curve of the Victorian brick roof.

'Reckless (With Your Love)', 'Lost In Time' and 'Manic' might make for a wander through the campest bits of disco-tinged house past, yet in the energy they pump through Heaven, it feels entirely current; disco, like sex, is something that exists in the heat of the moment. Azari & III are utopian, imagining a world where there was no homophobia and HIV had not killed the sexually liberated club scene of the '70s and '80s. In that decadent dream, Azari & III's massively phallic logo – a hand grasping a tall building – is 200-feet high at Wembley and they're invited as special guests on *Top Gear*... and there's absolutely nothing Jeremy Clarkson can do about it. ***Luke Turner***

View From The Crowd

Hannah Walker, London

"I just love what they've got going on generally, there's definitely something new and exciting about them, but it's also kind of a familiar sound at the same time. Oh, and the outfits were totally awesome!"

FIELD MUSIC

HMV PICTURE HOUSE, EDINBURGH
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6

If the age of the Brewis brothers is truly dawning, music's evolution should be a blast

Four albums and one solo record apiece into their career, for Field Music to be billed – as tonight's organisers have – as 'The Next Big Thing' indicates a rather hopeful belief that Next Big Thing-dom works like the collections queue at Argos: take your ticket and wait your turn. The irony certainly isn't lost on David Brewis, who at one point remarks to the crowd, "It's insane to think of us as the next big thing, given that we've been around for about a million years."

It's eight years, actually, but he's right: in today's musical climate – in which bands can be consigned to also-ran status before they're even out of the starting blocks – Field Music appear unlikely candidates indeed. Yet with 'Plumb', the brothers Brewis may just have made their 'Merriweather Post Pavilion': the layered, endlessly inventive masterpiece that opens the ears of the masses to their serially undervalued talents. Their setlist certainly draws heavily from it. While it's not *all* new songs – 'Let's Write A Book' and 'Something Familiar', from 2010's 'Field Music (Measure)' are given welcome airings – 'Plumb' is certainly what the focus is on. The album's opening three-song suite – 'Start The Day Right', 'It's OK To Change' and 'Sorry Again, Mate' – is faithfully replicated, and finds the band spinning the plates of teacup psychedelia, mournful McCartney-esque piano balladry, and floaty, Floyd-y prog-pop with artful aplomb. 'A New Town', meanwhile, with its prehensile licks of Jackson 5 guitar and David's elegant, debonair falsetto, is perhaps the funkiest thing to emerge from Sunderland since... well, we've written ourselves into a cul-de-sac there.

The atmosphere, it has to be said, is rather lacking: partly because the band are playing an album no-one here has heard yet, and partly because Field Music fans aren't exactly the sort to start chanting "*Here we fucking go!*" between every song. Still, if there's any justice in this world, whatever lingering familiarity issues people have with Field Music will be solved by their inevitable (and richly deserved) Mercury nomination. Next Big Things? It's not as silly as it sounds, you know... ***Barry Nicolson***

Setlist

'Start The Day Right'
'It's OK To Change'
'Sorry Again, Mate'
'Rockist'
'Let's' Write A Book'
'Is This The Picture?'
'If Only The Moon Were Up'
'Who'll Pay The Bills?'
'A New Town'
'Them That Do Nothing'
'Something Familiar'
'Share The Words'
'(I Keep Thinking About) A New Thing'

VICTOR FRANKOWSKI, TAKESHI SUGA

KING CHARLES

RELENTLESS GARAGE, LONDON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

It's just as well that London songwriter Charles Johnston has chosen to adopt the pop-cultural Mark Of Cain that is a head full of dreadlocks. It provides an easy hate-focus for what would otherwise be a confusingly conflicted pop proposition. As you might guess from his stage name, King Charles works a pantomime-historical English high camp, and plays reggae-inflected sunshine pop in a Jamie T vein. Opener 'Mr Flick' nods lyrically to folk legend Pete Seeger, but dons an Adam Ant-ish glam-pop bent with heavy rock guitar molestation. He looks like a Cavalier, rasta Prince. There's shades of Mika and Queen too. But with all this variety, it's a shame that what seems to be foregrounded most is the least interesting side, the Peñate-ish pep-pop. The likes of the Hammer-horror silliness of 'Polar Bear' or the skipping, foppish céilidh-pop of 'Lady Percy' are far more interesting. Worse, though, is the closer, a howling Dan Le Sac Vs Scroobius Pip-style update of Billy Joel's 1989 'list' hit 'We Didn't Start The Fire', in which KC rattles out a string of modern malaises such as "*Kate Moss, 50 Cent, Obama is the president... Abu Hamza... absurd Diana inquest*". King Charles has the potential to be big; he also has the potential to be good. Whichever path he chooses, sadly, he's always going to be less famous than about 93 different world monarchs and a breed of lapdog. A hair-flattening thought. ***Emily Mackay***

HOLY OTHER/BALAM ACAB/ oOoOO

BERGHAIN, BERLIN THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

Berlin's Berghain is a monolith, a sometime sex club where flesh seems pliant against unyielding expanse of concrete and steel. Not an obvious backdrop for Tri Angle's showcase – the NY label is more associated with 'spooky' and 'spectral' than sweaty and hard. Yet the motion-sick chords triggered by a parka-clad oOoOO suit the impersonal darkness – there's no pyrotechnics or crowd interaction, just a screen projecting artsy visuals of kids dicking about a U-Bahn station. The ambience of 'Mumbai' feels physically raw against faces still pink from the minus 12 degrees outside, while 'Burnout Eyesss'' languid vocals – courtesy of Butterclock – sound even better now everyone's stopped pretending witch house was a thing. Next up, New York's Balam Acab looks like he's stepped out of a Wes Anderson film and straight behind a MacBook running Ableton, thickening 'Wander/Wonder''s earthy production into wide-eyed pop. Hollow-cheeked Berliners may wince at the young producer crooning earnestly on 'Now Time' but the delicate, looping rhythm prevents things from going completely Enya. It's left to a hooded Holy Other to get blood flowing back to the extremities with his submerged and murky R&B. As the comedown romanticism of 'With U' stirs swaying bodies to gather their limbs and pump their fists, the evidence seems unimpeachable: right now, Tri Angle are unstoppable. ***Louise Brailey***

CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH

O2 ACADEMY 2, LIVERPOOL FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

In the meeting for Clap Your Hands Say Yeah's new album 'Hysterical', it seems that one idea was written up on the board in permanent marker: 'Synthesised strings, and lots of them!' In 2006, Clap brimmed with a pop charm that sounded instinctual and almost accidental, their weirdo alt-country an appealingly bitter antidote to the sugary pop moves of The Killers and The Bravery. But their new stuff feels less shaggy, less offbeat, and shiny keyboards cover over many of the more obtuse moments. There's barely even a hello to the crowd, and as they lumber through a set mixing new and old material, it's noticeable how fresher fare such as 'Same Mistake' and 'In A Motel' pass by with little fanfare. It's only towards the end of the set that they hit their stride, as 'Is This Love' and 'On This Tidal Wave Of Young Blood' come on like a short-lived greatest hits medley. But the band now seem a little out of touch with what they used to be. Once-sharp teeth corked, they sit in the middle ground between the idiosyncrasies of old and the desire to smooth out their flaws to please a lowest common denominator. As a result, they find themselves lurking in the wrong kind of backwoods: the sort no-one would want to visit. ***Mike Doherty***

MARK ALLAN

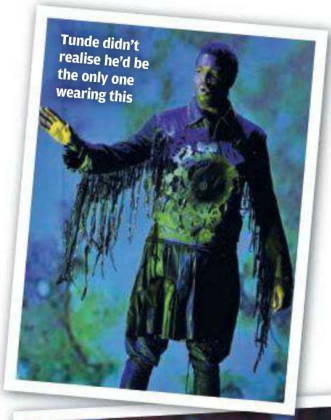
Hope Aaron and Bryce's kept the receipts for their lightsabers

THE LONG COUNT

BARBICAN CENTRE, LONDON

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

The National's Dessner brothers' multi-media song cycle is patchily impressive



Tunde didn't realise he'd be the only one wearing this

Kelley Deal serenades her own violin

It's over two years since The National's twin guitarists Aaron and Bryce Dessner originally premiered *The Long Count* at the Brooklyn Academy Of Music. Tirelessly ambitious, it's a multimedia song-cycle about the Mayan creation myth that supposedly precipitates this December's apocalypse, which isn't a sentence you'll ever read about a Tribes side project.

Considering that there's just nine months before we get engulfed in a diabolical fireball, it's unsurprising that crowds flocking to the first of three London performances have assumed that *The Long Count* is about the end of days. But as the show's visual collaborator, British artist Matthew Ritchie, emphasises, it's about creation, not destruction. The insistence on the detail is interesting, as *The Long Count* is far more cataclysmic than anything the Dessners play in The National – Aaron's guitar-playing at the start of 'Dry Creek' sounds like mathy metal, for instance, although there are a handful of milder moments led by a 14-piece orchestra.

Ritchie's statement also illustrates that while the concept may have been valuable as an inspiration for writing, it's not wildly vital to the audience. Aaron and Bryce's baseball-obsessed childhood plays a loose role, manifesting in a moderately awkward sequence where a guitar is lowered from the ceiling and the twins hit it with bats. The instrument squalls thrillingly, but they look like kids shyly walloping a piñata.

The theatrics are best left to the guest singers – TV On The Radio's Tunde Adebimpe is solemn and awe-inspiring, commanding the stage while dressed as a warrior and devastatingly intoning, "*Soon you will know our sleep*" on his first song, 'Our Sleep'. Shara Worden of My Brightest Diamond's face is obscured with large Christmas decorations, but her arresting operatic trills otherwise bring clarity to the piece's wickedly knotty orchestration. Best of all is The Breeders' Kelley Deal, scampering onstage scoring lines in the floor with a screeching, amplified knife before howling intimidatingly and scraping the strings off a violin made victim on 'Bull Run'.

While they're not best suited to am-dram, the performance unequivocally hangs around Aaron and Bryce's astonishing guitar-playing. Being twins and obsessive collaborators has given them an innate understanding of their respective techniques; they can mirror melodies on sight. Watching them stand face-to-face, intimately observing each other's hands and forming drones, tense chase sequences and violent counterpoints feels voyeuristic, capturing them at a moment of creation in a space where promise far outweighs inevitability. *The Long Count* isn't quite a masterpiece, but provided the world doesn't implode come December, the Dessners may well make one yet. ***Laura Snapes***

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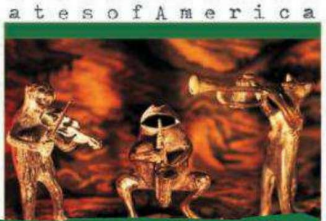

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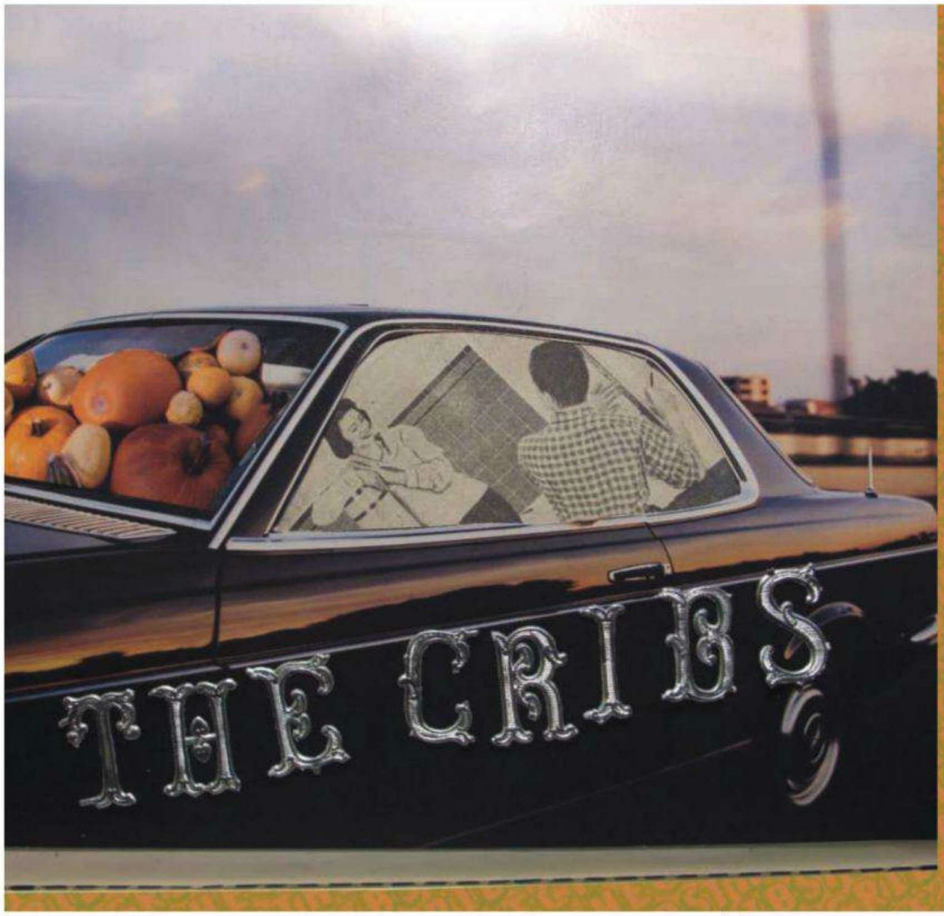

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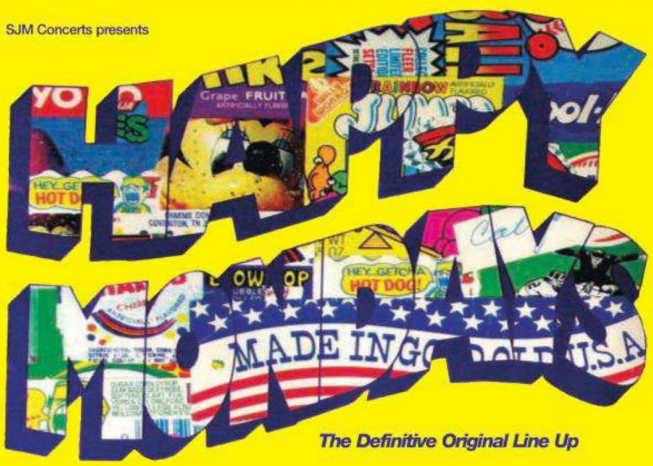

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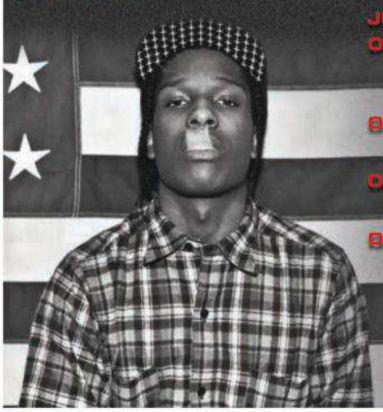

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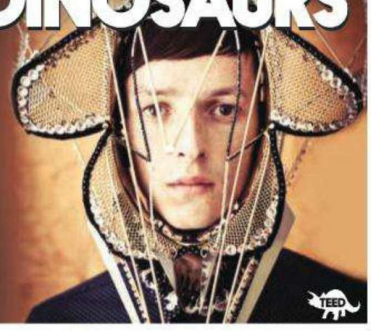

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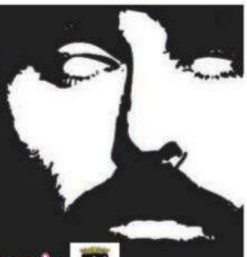

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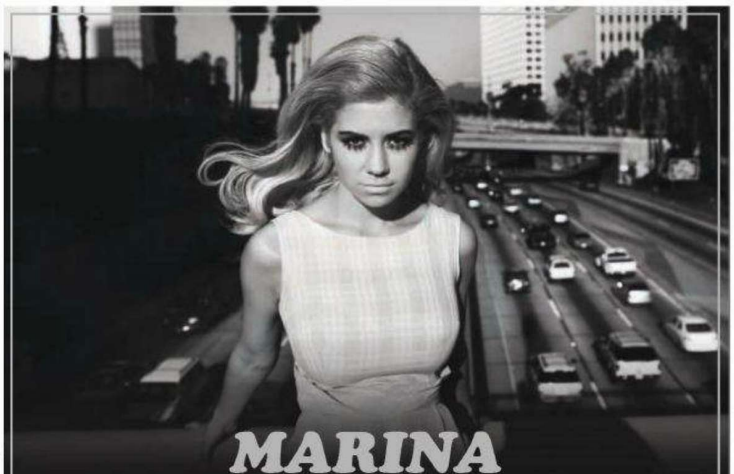

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Mon 27th Feb - The Riverside, Sheffield
Tues 28th Feb - Stereo, York
Weds 29th Feb - Captain's Rest, Glasgow
Thurs 1st March - Mello Mello, Liverpool
Fri 2nd March - The Chameleon, Nottingham
Sat 3rd March - The Victoria (Dalston), London

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THE UK'S BIGGEST GUIDE TO THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Laura Snapes

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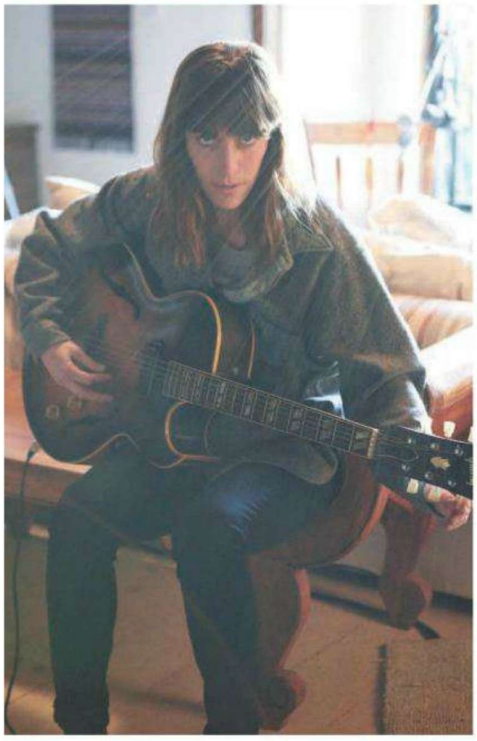


GREEN MAN FESTIVAL

STARTS: Powys Glanusk Park, Aug 17

DON'T MISS

Ten years since its inception, Wales' Green Man festival has become one of the most vital alt. fixtures on the calendar – and the line-up for their 10th anniversary is a belter. The first headliner to be announced is Feist (pictured), closing Sunday night. The Walkmen make a welcome return, Islet frolic in the green glades that form the setting of 'Illuminated People', and their Shape Records mate Sweet Baboo plays too. Junior Boys, Ghostpoet, Peaking Lights and Alt-J bring bleeps and blips, Teeth Of The Sea, Scritti Politti and Slow Club insert a little bite, while Yann Tiersen, The Felice Brothers and Jonathan Richman bring the melody. And there's still two more headliners and over 100 more bands to be announced. Happy birthday!

FRANKIE & THE HEARTSTRINGS

STARTS: London Lexington, Feb 24

Sunderland's peppiest bring their Pop Sex club night to London, with Leeds newcomers Hookworms in support.

THIS IS THE KIT

STARTS: Norwich Arts Centre, Feb 25

The Bristol-based folk band sign to The National's Brassland record label to re-release their second album, 'Wriggle Out The Restless', and tour.

ATP CURATED BY JEFF MANGUM

STARTS: Butlins Minehead, Mar 9

The weekender adds Sun Ra Arkestra, Oneohtrix Point Never (pictured) and Feathers to Joanna Newsom and The Fall.

REN HARVIEU

STARTS: Manchester Ruby Lounge, Apr 1

James Allan's favourite new artist heads out on a headline tour, having spent February doing the rounds with Benjamin Francis Leftwich.

DANIEL JOHNSTON

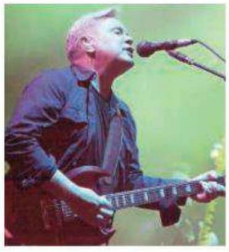
STARTS: Brighton St Bartholomew's Church, Apr 16

The cult singer-songwriter brings his intimate confessionals to the south coast, backed with guests.

FRANCOIS & THE ATLAS MOUNTAINS

STARTS: London Cargo, Apr 18

Blending Afrobeat and French disco, F&TAM play Cargo, and confirm for Great Escape (May 10-12).



NEW ORDER

STARTS: O2 Apollo Manchester, Apr 26

The rejuvenated – and still Hook-free – New Order announce their first full UK tour in six years, after a short run of dates in 2011.

A PLACE TO BURY STRANGERS

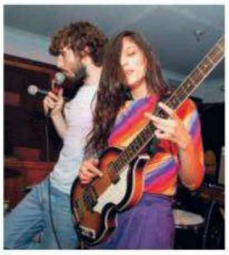
STARTS: London Cargo, May 8

The NYC noise-rockers start a tour in London to promote the release of their first EP 'Onwards To The Wall'.

LIVERPOOL SOUND CITY

STARTS: Liverpool various venues, May 17

Professor Green headlines, while White Denim, Death In Vegas, Cloud Nothings (pictured), Charli XCX and Fixers also feature.



ISLET

STARTS: Liverpool Kazimier, May 25

Cardiff's most open-spirited and wide-eyed head out on tour to convert the masses into the 'Illuminated People' that shine through their debut album.

NO DIRECTION HOME

STARTS: Sherwood Forest Wellbeck Abbey, Jun 8

Richard Hawley (pictured), Wet Nuns and Cold Specks join the NDR bill for some woodland fun this June.

SUNN O)))

STARTS: Manchester HMV Ritz, Jun 11

Bring a pair of spare undercrackers – the Seattle doom-rock band are known for bringing the "brown note" (Google it, don't blame us for the results).

RICHARD JOHNSON, BEN CANNON, REDFERNS

PICK *of the* WEEK

What to see this week? Let us help

NME AWARDS TOUR/SHOWS

STARTS: Nationwide, Feb 15

NME PICK

We can only imagine what's going on inside the NME Awards Tour bus this week, as Azealia terrorizes Metronomy's Joe Mount, and Tribes compete with Two Door Cinema Club to try and stuff another errant fangirl into their bunks. Even so, the bus rolls on, hitting Leeds (Feb 15), Norwich (17), Birmingham (18), Cardiff (19) and Bristol (20). In the capital, there are heaps of huge NME Awards Shows: Band Of Skulls, Dale Earnhardt Jr Jr and The Static Jacks play XOYO (Feb 15), Tune-Yards and Trailer Trash Tracys get freaky at the O2 Shepherds Bush Empire (15); Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs headline Heaven with Willy Moon (16), Cloud Control, We Are Augustines, Dog Is Dead and Citizens blow up at Camden's Electric Ballroom (17), The Big Pink, Mozart Parties and Sissy & The Blisters take the Garage (20) and Kurt Vile, Sonic Boom and Real Estate blitz KOKO (21).

Don't Miss
FACTORY FLOOR

STARTS: London ICA, Feb 18

In 1944, Polish couple Stefan and Franciszka Themerson made a film called *The Eye And The Ear*, which explored the relationship between sight and sound. This weekend at London's ICA, the inexhaustibly creative Factory Floor present their own improvised soundtrack in response – which, it's fair to speculate, will probably deafen and blind in equal, brilliant measure.

Everyone's Talking About
SPECTOR

STARTS: Glasgow King Tut's, Feb 15

Whichever way Fred Macpherson's bolshy proclamations rub you up, it'd be a churlish snob who couldn't find something to love in the band's new video, for 'Chevy Thunder'. Driving through Mexican deserts dressed like total wazzocks, pashing old ladies, getting roughed up by gangs... you can't deny that Spector put the effort in, bless 'em.

Radar Stars
DJANGO DJANGO

STARTS: Norwich Arts Centre, Feb 17

New bands say a *lot* of stupid things in interviews. But when Django Django's drummer and producer, David Maclean, said, "You should never be afraid to make a fool of yourself for art," it was a blessed relief. DD's hyperactive, chant-led psychedelia brings us out in a weird, deeply uncool dance, and at least now we know they won't be giggling at us from the stage.

WEDNESDAY

February 15

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Ben Howard/Daughter Concorde 2 01273 673 311
Brother & Bones/Royal Blood Prince Albert 01273 730 499
Errors The Haunt 01273 770 847
Michael Kiwanuka/The Staves Komedia 01273 647 100
Sanity Valve The Hope 01273 723 568

BRISTOL
Big Country O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Blondes The Lanes 0117 325 1979
Kiss Your Commander/Off The Wall/8 Days Later Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Mirielle Mathlener Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Rich Robinson/Dave O'Grady/Ulysses Fleece 0117 945 0996
Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs Thekla 08713 100000

CAMBRIDGE
Electric Youth Revolt/The Real Reason Corner House 01223 352 047

CARDIFF
Lights Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Zoo Pop Arts Institute 0871 230 1094

DERBY
Hoodlums The Vic Inn 01332 74 00 91

EDINBURGH
High Places Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757
Paul Carrack Queens Hall 0131 668 2019

EXETER
Fingersnap Phoenix 01392 667080

GATESHEAD
Steve Hackett Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
Carly Connor Brel 0141 342 4966
James Morrison O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Masters In France Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Midnight Lion The Arches 0141 565 1000
Rams Pocket Radio Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637
Spector King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

HATFIELD
Aggro Santos The Forum 0844 477 2000

LEEDS
Backyards Nation Of Shopkeepers 0113 203 1831
Brontide Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Outfit Cockpit 0113 244 3446
NME AWARDS TOUR Two Door Cinema Club/Metronomy/Tribes/Azealia Banks O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
The Underground Railroad Oporto 0113 245 4444

LONDON
Anais Mitchell Westminster Reference Library 020 7641 4636
Another's Blood/The Good Natured/Karima Francis Proud Galleries 020 7482 3867
Attack! Attack!/Itchy Poopzkid/Reaper In Sicily Garage 020 7607 1818
NME AWARDS SHOW Band Of Skulls/Dale Earnhardt Jr Jr/The Static Jacks XOYO 020 7729 5959
The Blueberries New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866
Butterflies On Strings/Foreign Legion The Bowery 020 7580 3057
Candice Gordon/The Tenfivesixty Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Caveman MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Ed Laurie Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
The Fix 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Ghostpoet/Alt-J KOKO 020 7388 3222
The Gypsy Switch/The Worms Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
The Heatwaves Social 020 7636 4992
James Vincent McMorrow Royal Festival Hall 020 7960 4242
The Kabeedies Barfly 0870 907 0999
Krisiun Underworld 020 7482 1932
Labyrinth Ear/Hourglass Sea/Jewellers Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Matthew Bourne Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Megson Wilmington Arms 020 7837 1384
Mike Marlin Concrete 020 7729 1888
Red Sky July Green Note 0871 230 1094
Ren Harvieu The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Robbo Ranx/Mikey Dread Roundhouse 020 7482 7318
Texas Radio Band/The Dead Pirates/The Cream Tangerines Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
NME AWARDS SHOW Tune-Yards/Trailer Trash Tracys O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
We Have Band Cargo 0207 749 7840

MANCHESTER
Abbie Broom Tiger Lounge 0161 236 6007
The Big Pink/2:54 Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Big Sexy Noise Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Carnifex/Beneath The Massacre/Within The Ruins Moho Live 0161 834 8180
Hannah Atkins/Shane Beales Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
My Extraordinary/Years/This Is How We Fall Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
New Found Glory/The Blackout/Ietlive Academy 0161 832 1111

MILTON KEYNES
Mary Bourke/Tony Cowards Stables 01908 280800

NEWCASTLE
Lisa Mills/Ian Jennings Cluny 0191 230 4474
Pulled Apart By Horses/The Computers Digital 01912 619755

NORWICH
The Leisure Society/Dan Michaelson & The Coastguards Arts Centre 01603 660 352

NOTTINGHAM
Hyro Da Hero/Marmozets/Astroid Boys Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
Kevin Montgomery/The Endangered Livers Maze 0115 947 5650
The Twilight Sad Stealth 08713 100000
The Wanted Capital FM Arena 0115 948 4526

OXFORD
Skrillex O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

POOLE
Misty's Big Adventure Mr Kyps 01202 748945

SHEFFIELD
Danny & The Champions Of The World/Billy Vincent Greystones 0114 266 5599
Rich Robinson City Hall 0114 278 9789

YORK
Scholars Stereo 01904 612237

Pulled Apart By Horses, Digital, Newcastle

ANIKA MOTTERSHAW, EMILIE BAILEY, TOM MARTIN, DAN DENNISON, JACK TAYLOR, RICHARD JOHNSON, VICTOR FRANKOWSKI

THURSDAY
February 16

Grouplove, The Haunt, Brighton

ABERDEEN
Duke/Jamie & The Portraits Cafe Drummond 01224 624642
Steve Hackett Lemon Tree 01224 642230

BATH
Son Of Eagle/Megan Henwood Chapel Arts Centre 0122 5404445

BELFAST
Jill Jackson Auntie Annie's 028 9050 1660
Nick Lowe Empire 028 9024 9276
Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds Odyssey 028 9073 9074

BIRMINGHAM
The Big Pink HMV Institute (Library) 0844 248 5037
GZA The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
Killtimers/Scarlet Creek/ The Regulars O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
New Found Glory/The Blackout/ letlive O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
We Have Band HMV Institute (Temple) 0844 248 5037

BRIGHTON
Bodies Latest Music Bar 01273 687 171
Grouplove The Haunt 01273 770 847
The Kabeedies/Alloy Ark The Hope 01273 723 568

BRISTOL
Apache/Madeline Black/The Veneer Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Brontide/Archimedes/Aulos Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Midnight Lion Thekla 08713 100000
Moishe's Bagel Colston Hall 0117 922 3683
Phantom Limb Fleece 0117 945 0996
Saturday's Kids/Ono Palindromes/ Let's Kill Janice Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Skrillex O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

CAMBRIDGE
Rizzle Kicks Junction 01223 511511

CARDIFF
The Invisible Face & Heel Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Preston Reed Chapter Arts Centre 029 2031 1050

CHELMSFORD
Jakob Deist/Taylor James Hooga 01245 356 811

COVENTRY
The Enemy S7ven 07834 365815

DERBY
Scams Venue 01332 203545

EDINBURGH
Masters In France Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757

EXETER
Joe Bloggers/Ahab/Juan Zelada Cavern Club 01392 495 370

GATESHEAD
Death To Indie/Sister Rose Three Tuns 0191 487 0666

GLASGOW
High Places The Arches 0141 565 1000
Outfit Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Shinedown/Halestorm O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Sweet Sweet Lies King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279

GUILDFORD
Hip Slinky Boileroom 01483 539 539

LEEDS
Abbie Broom Verve 0113 2442272
Alestorm The Well 0113 2440474
Attack! Attack! Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Spector Cockpit Room 2 0113 244 3446
The Twilight Sad Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

LEICESTER
Danny & The Champions Of The World/Billy Vincent Donkey 0116 270 5042
Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman Musician 0116 251 0080

LIVERPOOL
Dirtblonde Mello Mello 0151 707 0898
PopRock/White Cliff Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901

LONDON
Atlantic & Lion/Troops Of Mafeking/Zorzilla Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Barringtone/Ozonna Lock Tavern 020 7485 0909
Blindness Half Moon 020 7274 2733
Blondes/Eaux/Rory Phillips Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
The Blood Sport/Morning Wire The Shoreditch 020 7033 0085
Common Unity 003 New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866
Dawes Rough Trade East 0207 392 7788
Deadbeat Darling Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
The Dead Famous/This Is Freedom Barfly 0870 907 0999
Dot Rotten/Ruby Goe Arts Club 020 7460 4459
Dragonforce 100 Club 020 7636 0933
Errors XOYO 020 7729 5959
Good Dangers/Peter & The Harmonics Zigfrid Von Underbelly 020 7613 1988
Go Romano O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
Hey Colossus/Liberez/The Lowest Form Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
The Holiday Plan Nambucca 020 7272 7366
Ivyrise/Franko Borderline 020 7734 5547
I Dream In Colour Cargo 0207 749 7840
James Cornthwaite 93 Feet East 020 7247 6095
J Skol MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Last Witness/Prowler/Breaking Point Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Let's Wrestle/Milky Wimpshake/ Omi Palone The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Lumps/Sebastian Lexer/Steve Noble Duo Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Michael Kiwanuka/The Staves Assembly Hall 020 8577 6969
M83/Porcelain Raft O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
Nat Johnson & The Figureheads Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Niki & The Dove Hoxton Square Bar & Grill 020 7613 0709
Poino/Trogons/Chips For The Poor Windmill 020 8671 0700
Radio Zastava Bedroom Bar 020 7613 5637
Sam Lee Hackney Attic 0871 902 5734
NME AWARDS SHOW Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs/Willy Moon Heaven 020 7930 2020
Virgil Howe Camino 020 7841 7331

MANCHESTER
Allaira Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Dale Earnhardt Jr Jr The Castle 0161 237 9485
Decade Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
The Hamsters Band On The Wall 0161 832 6625
Melissa Etheridge Academy 0161 832 1111
Nucleus Roots Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392

MILTON KEYNES
Futures/O'Casan/The High Jinks Craufurd Arms 01908 313 864

NEWCASTLE
Brand New/I Am The Avalanche O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Cherry Ghost Cluny 0191 230 4474
Molly Nilsson/Rhodri Davies/Man With Feathers Hey Baby Chief Panda

NORWICH
Hyro Da Hero/Astroid Boys Waterfront 01603 632 717
Lee Mitchell The Bicycle Shop 01603 625 777
The Zoom Club/Papa Shango Brickmakers 01603 441 118

NOTTINGHAM
Big Country Rock City 08713 100000

OXFORD
Dead Jerichos/Dance A La Plage Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775
Fink O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Phronesis Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156

PLYMOUTH
Brother & Bones Ride Cafe 01752 222305

POOLE
John Holt Mr Kyps 01202 748945

PRESTON
Big Sexy Noise/The Gilded Palace Of Sin The Continental 01772 499 425

SHEFFIELD
Dead Like Harry Greystones 0114 266 5599
The Leisure Society Harley 0114 275 2288
Lisa Mills/Ian Jennings Greystones 0114 266 5599
Pulled Apart By Horses/The Computers Leadmill 0114 221 2828

SOUTHAMPTON
I Divide Unit 02380 225612

WOLVERHAMPTON
Skinny Molly/Mike Estes Robin 2 01902 497860

YORK
Fraser/Lost On The Underside/The Fourth Wall Fibbers 01904 651 250
Gloria Black Swan Inn 01904 686 911
Rams Pocket Radio/Hello Eskimo/ One Way Street Stereo 01904 612237
You Cried Wolf/The Tides/Fall Of The Hero The Duchess 01904 641 413

FRIDAY
February 17

ABERDEEN
Midge Ure Lemon Tree 01224 642230

BEDFORD
Danny & The Champions Of The World Gordon Arms 01234 269519
Nine Below Zero Esquires 01234 340120

BIRMINGHAM
Big Country O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Bongo Damo Hare & Hounds 0870 264 3333
Milky Wimpshake The Edge 0121 772 6160
Not By Design/MOD The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
Skint & Demoralised/Dutch Cousin Eddie's Rock Club 0121 643 2093
Steve Cradock HMV Institute 0844 248 5037

BRIGHTON
Asian Dub Foundation Concorde 2 01273 673 311
Born Bad Komedia 01273 647 100
Forestears The Blind Tiger 01273 681228
Lights The Haunt 01273 770 847
Old Apparatus/Pye Corner Audio Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 01273 749 465
Seero The Hope 01273 723 568
Sirens Latest Music Bar 01273 687 171

BRISTOL
The Bled The Cooler 0117 945 0999
Celestine Canteen 0117 923 2017
Clumsy Mr Wolf's 0117 927 3221
Crinke Cuts Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
COI Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Edenheight Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
High Places/The Hysterical Injury Cube Cinema 0117 907 4190
Karnataka Colston Hall 0117 922 3683
Space Witch/Cernunnos Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Young Kato Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE
The Static Jacks/Dirty Cousins Corner House 01223 352 047

CARDIFF
Brand New University 029 2023 0130

CHELMSFORD
Coulers Hooga 01245 356 811

DUNDEE
Masters In France Doghouse 01382 227080

EDINBURGH
Skinner Electric Circus 0131 226 4224
Youngman Cabaret Voltaire 0131 220 6176

GLASGOW
Beth Jeans Houghton Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
The Dirty Looks O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Lydia Lunch Stereo 0141 576 5018

GREAT YARMOUTH
Electric Youth Revolt Club Uniquity 01502 730 281

GUILDFORD
Bryony Griffith & Will Hampson Institute 01483 274389
Jazzsteppa Boileroom 01483 539 539

HATFIELD
Stooshe The Forum 0844 477 2000

LEEDS
Cherry Ghost Wardrobe 0113 222 3434
Errors Cockpit 0113 244 3446
James Morrison O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Pengilly's/Garnets Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Return To Aljustrel/Little Victories/ Stella Frays Eiger 0113 244 4105
Simon Pollard Band/Silverlode Milo 0113 245 7101
Zinc/P Money/Plastician Mint Club 0113 244 9474

LEICESTER
Ghostpoet Sub 91
The Kabeedies Soundhouse 07830 425555
Mr Scruff O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

LIVERPOOL
Decade Picket 0151 708 5318
James Lavelle O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Rams Pocket Radio Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901

LONDON
Andrew Weatherall Garage 020 7607 1818
A Grave With No Name CAMP Basement 0871 230 1094
Benny Page Jamm 020 7274 5537
Bloodgroup/Sandra Kolstad Roundhouse (Studio) 020 7482 7318
Brontide The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Candy Tree Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Chicago Skyway Horse & Groom 020 8672 1780
Cities Of Glass/The New Cut Gang Roadtrip 020 7253 6787
NME AWARDS SHOW Cloud Control/We Are Augustines/Dog Is Dead/Citizens Electric Ballroom 020 7485 9006
Curxes Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478

CLUB NME
LONDON
FUTURES/FLASH FIKTION
FRIDAY, FEB 17
KOKO
0844 847 2258

Daniela Brooker 229 Club 020 7631 8310
Dawes Windmill 020 8671 0700
The Devil Wears Prada/Last Witness Underworld 020 7482 1932
Dexter Dextrous Silver Bullet 020 7619 3639
Enter Shikari Book Club 020 7684 8618
Fink KOKO 020 7388 3222
Futures/Flash Fiktion Club NME @ Koko 0870 4325527
Gaoler's Daughter Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Gaz Mayell/Big Joe Louis Paradise 020 8969 0098
Jubilee Barfly 0870 907 0999
Junior Booker Cavendish Arms 0207 627 0698
Melic Under The Bridge 020 7957 8261
Melissa Etheridge O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
The Men That Will Not Be Blamed For Nothing The Bowery 020 7580 3057
Modestep Nest 020 7354 9993
New Found Glory/The Blackout/ letlive Roundhouse 020 7482 7318
Pink Crudge Caravan/In Search Of Nambucca 020 7272 7366
Scarlett Valentine/Floyd Hasselbaink MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Skrillex Electric Brixton 020 7274 2290
Skrillex O2 Academy Brixton 0870 477 2000
Snowboy/Healer Selecta Madame Jojo's 020 7734 2473
St Spirit Amersham Arms 0208 469 1499
Thee Savage Kicks/Young Man Dead Good Ship 020 7372 2544
Too Many Ts The Shoreditch 020 7033 0085
The Vinyl Stitches Alley Cat 020 7836 1451
The Wolf Tracks ULU 020 7664 2000
Yolanda Brown HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
The Yo-Yos Barfly 0870 907 0999

MANCHESTER
Ben Howard HMV Ritz 0161 236 4355
The Devil's Blood Moho Live 0161 834 8180
Kaiser Chiefs/Frankie & The Heartstrings Academy 0161 832 1111
Pulled Apart By Horses/The Computers Academy 2 0161 832 1111
Real Estate/Childhood/Outfit Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
The Threat Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
We Have Band Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Yousef Joshua Brooks 07790 060562

MILTON KEYNES
Magrex Craufurd Arms 01908 313 864
Martyna Stables 01908 280800

NEWCASTLE
Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman Cluny 0191 230 4474
The Leisure Society Cluny 0191 230 4474
Simon Townshend O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

NORWICH
Django Django Arts Centre 01603 660 352
Ivyrise Brickmakers 01603 441 118
Pout At The Devil Brickmakers 01603 441 118
NME AWARDS TOUR Two Door Cinema Club/Metronomy/Tribes/ Azealia Banks UEA 01603 505401

NOTTINGHAM
Fairlight Stealth 08713 100000
Souvaris Contemporary 0115 948 9750

OXFORD
DJ Format Cellar 01865 244 761
Ox Wheatsheaf 01865 721 156

Port Isaac
Louis Eliot & The Embers Golden Lion 01208 880336

PLYMOUTH
Dead Poets White Rabbit 01752 227522

PRESTON
Bilge Pump/The Fifty 50s Mad Ferret 07919 896 636
Tom Hingley The Continental 01772 499 425

SHEFFIELD
Attila The Stockbroker/Patrik Fitzgerald Greystones 0114 266 5599
Radical Boy The Cremorne 0114 250 9974
Zinc Plug 0114 276 7093

SOUTHAMPTON
Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs Orange Rooms 02380 232333

TRURO
Crowns B-Side 01872 241220

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Hyro Da Hero/Astroid Boys/The Marmozets The Forum 0871 277 7101

WOLVERHAMPTON
Dressed To Kill/Disarm Goliath Robin 2 01902 497860

YORK
Grouplove Fibbers 01904 651 250
Spector The Duchess 01904 641 413

SATURDAY
February 18

ABERDEEN
Carly Connor Cafe Drummond 01224 624642
Rod Jones & The Birthday Suit The Tunnels 01224 211121

BATH
Ahab Chapel Arts Centre 0122 5404445

BEDFORD
The 1930s Esquires 01234 340120

BELFAST
Borgore Stiff Kitten 028 9023 8700
Young Guns Queens University 028 9097 3106

BIRMINGHAM
Claustrophobique/Lucid Uprising O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
Forests/Sunrise Over Europe Flapper 0121 236 2421
Inkubus Sukkubus/Salvation/ Zeitgeist Zero The Ballroom 0121 448 0797
John Holt Drum 0121 333 2400
Need For Mirrors/Skitty HMV Institute (Library) 0844 248 5037
Open To Fire/The Sharp Darts/The Town The Bear Tavern 0121 429 1184
Outfit Rainbow 0121 772 8174
NME AWARDS TOUR Two Door Cinema Club/Metronomy/ Tribes/Azealia Banks O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

BRIGHTON
The Big Pink/2:54/Two Jackals Digital 01273 202407
Screama Ballerina/Nightworkers The Hope 01273 723 568
Totally Enormous Extinct Dinosaurs/The 2 Bears Digital 01273 202407

BRISTOL
The Correspondents /Krafty Kuts/ The Nextmen Motion Ramp Park 01179 723111
Dreamscape Fire Engine 07521 974070
Electric Youth Revolt Mother's Ruin 0117 925 6969
Forestears/The King of Hearts/ Three Kings High Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Goan Dogs/The Bad Joke That Ended Well/Eyes For Gertrude Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
GZA O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Kevin Montgomery The Tunnels 0117 929 9008
Kyle Lewis Start The Bus 0117 930 4370
Milky Wimpshake/The Short Stories/Peru Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Pulled Apart By Horses/The Computers Fleece 0117 945 0996

CAMBRIDGE
Evil Scarecrow Portland Arms 01223 357268
Fink St Paul's Centre 01223 354 186

CARDIFF
Llwybr Llaethog/My Phormula Clwb Ifor Bach 029 2023 2199
Mike TV 10 Feet Tall 02920 228883

CARLISLE
1990s Brickyard 01228 512 220

COVENTRY
Glimpse Carey's Bar 07714 105091

DEAL
Nine Below Zero Astor Theatre 01304 366077

DERBY
X-UFO Old Bell 01332 343701

DORKING
Wrank Lincoln Arms 01306 882 820

DUNDEE
To Kill Achilles/Silent Nothing Beat Generator 01382 229226

EDINBURGH
Ben Howard Queens Hall 0131 668 2019

EXETER
Ox Cavern Club 01392 495 370

FALMOUTH
Megan Henwood/Son Of Eagle Miss Peapod's 0871 230 1094

GATESHEAD
Danny & The Champions Of The World The Central 0191 478 2543

GLASGOW
Field Music Stereo 0141 576 5018
John Wean Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Phantom Limb King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Pilljaw O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Rafiki Jazz Maggie May's 0141 548 1350
Real Estate The Arches 0141 565 1000
Serafina Steer The Arches 0141 565 1000
Viva Stereo/Found/Lonely Tourist O2 ABC2 0141 204 5151
Zinc/Plastician/P Money The Arches 0141 565 1000

GUILDFORD
Holy State Boileroom 01483 539 539

LEEDS
Band Of Skulls University 0113 244 4600
Decade Cockpit 0113 244 3446
Michael Kiwanuka/The Staves Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

LEICESTER
Joel Owen/The Antoine Band/Martin Luke Brown Donkey 0116 270 5042
The Screening O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000

LIVERPOOL
Brother & Bones/Edwardian Picnic & Friends Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
Dodgy Eric's Club
The Sterlings Zanzibar 0151 707 0633

LONDON
Alcest/Les Discrets/Soror Dolorosa Purple Turtle 020 7383 4976
Alestorm/Claim The Throne/ Darkest Era O2 Academy Islington 0870 477 2000
Bad Manners Assembly Hall 020 8577 6969
The Bled Dingwalls 020 7267 1577
Bogus Gasman/China Shop Bull New Cross Inn 020 8692 1866
Demented Are Go Boston Arms 020 7272 8153
The Dirty Truth/Black Knight Barfly 0870 907 0999
Factory Floor ICA 020 7930 3647
Gauntlet Hair Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
Heavy Metal Kids/Black Sheep Merton Manor Club 020 8715 1292
Hyro Da Hero/Astroid Boys Borderline 020 7734 5547
Internet Forever/Stairs To Korea/Her Parents Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
Islands In Oceans/Holland Barfly 0870 907 0999
Jacques Lu Cont XOYO 020 7729 5959
Jo Bliss Underworld 020 7482 1932
Lightning Seeds O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000

Ghostpoet, Sound Control, Manchester

The Light Parades/The 87/Free Field The Shoreditch 020 7033 0085
The Loose Cannons Hoxton Pony 0871 9624530
Molly Nilsson Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
Mr Scruff KOKO 020 7388 3222
Muevete Arts Club 020 7460 4459
Oh No! Garage 020 7607 1818
Pistollettos/Fortline Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Skrillex Electric Brixton 020 7274 2290
Skrillex O2 Academy Brixton 0870 477 2000
Sunday Driver/Anja McCloskey/ Pepe Belmonte Union Chapel 020 7226 1686
Tristan Town/The Hookz Cavendish Arms 0207 627 0698
Willie & The Bandits Arch Angel 020 7938 4137
Yes Sir Boss! Bedroom Bar 020 7613 5637

MANCHESTER
Chicago Skyway Islington Mill 0871 230 1094
Citizens The Castle 0161 237 9485
Dawes Academy 3 0161 832 1111
Daystar Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
Ghostpoet Sound Control 0161 236 0340
Kaiser Chiefs/All The Young/Fixers Academy 0161 832 1111
Olly Murs Evening News Arena 0161 950 5000
Skint & Demoralised Dry Bar 0161 236 5920
Spector/David's Lyre Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019

NEWCASTLE
Arks Cluny 0191 230 4474
Dom Thomas Star And Shadow Cinema 0191 2610066
The Fractured Valves Black Bull 0191 414 2846
Miles Hunt/Erica Nockells Cluny 0191 230 4474

NORWICH
Avenge Thee And Naime/Elhugo/ Silk Men Brickmakers 01603 441 118
Dog Is Dead Arts Centre 01603 660 352
Dressed To Kill/The Fuel Girls Waterfront 01603 632 717

NOTTINGHAM
Dale Earnhardt Jr Jr Stealth 08713 100000
James Morrison Royal Centre 0115 948 2525
Mind Set A Threat Rock City 08713 100000
Thee Spivs/Bruce Carl/Bus Stop Madonnas The Navigation 0115 9417 139

OXFORD
Dedlok/Terrathorn/In Decadence O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000
Matt Chanarin Isis Farmhouse 01865 243854
Shattered Dreams Folly Bridge Inn 01865 790 106

PORTSMOUTH
Ivyrise/Franko Cellars 0871 230 1094

PRESTON
Wet Nuns Mad Ferret 07919 896 636

REDRUTH
Rosie Vanier Melting Pot 07915 252757

SHEFFIELD
Addison Groove/LJ Freeman/Thefft Plug 0114 276 7093
Big Country O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Grouplove Leadmill 0114 221 2828
Laughing Gravy New Barrack Tavern 0114 234 9148
Man Bites Fridge Cobden View Hotel 0114 266 3714
Rizzle Kicks/Random Impulse Plug 0114 276 7093
The Wanted Motorpoint Arena 0114 565656

SOUTHAMPTON
Geddes Junk Club 023 8033 5445
Larry Miller Brook 023 8055 5366

WINCHESTER
The Deep Dark Woods Railway Inn 01962 867795

YORK
Lollypop The Duchess 01904 641 413
Tyr/Ravenage/Maelstrom Fibbers 01904 651 250

SUNDAY
February 19

BELFAST
Jody Has A Hitlist Queens University 028 9097 3106

BIRMINGHAM
Fink Glee Club 0870 241 5093
Lights O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
Mike McGoldrick/John McCusker MAC 0121 440 3838
One Sixth Of Tommy Yardbird 0121 212 2524
Skrillex O2 Academy 0870 477 2000

BOURNEMOUTH
Lester Allen Centre Stage

BRIGHTON
Asbest Fishbowl 01273 777 505
The Deep Dark Woods Sticky Mike's Frog Bar 01273 749 465
Electric Youth Revolt The Globe 01273 770 685
Kevin Montgomery Latest Music Bar 01273 687 171
Melissa Etheridge Dome 01273 709709

BRISTOL
Cardinals/Fel Fiasco/Last Night's Victory Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Gauntlet Hair Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Hyro Da Hero/The Marmozets/ Astroid Boys Thekla 08713 100000
Loney Dear Louisiana 0117 926 5978
Paul Bradley Canteen 0117 923 2017
The Wiyos The Tunnels 0117 929 9008

CARDIFF
My Phormula Gwdihw Cafe Bar 029 2039 7933
NME AWARDS TOUR Two Door Cinema Club/Metronomy/ Tribes/Azealia Banks University 029 2023 0130

DUNDEE
Bleech/Shoogar/Same Jame Doghouse 01382 227080
The Outcasts Beat Generator 01382 229226

EDINBURGH
Phantom Limb Electric Circus 0131 226 4224

GATESHEAD
Volcano Juniors Sage Arena 0870 703 4555

GLASGOW
Ben Howard O2 ABC 0870 903 3444
Django Django Stereo 0141 576 5018

LANCASTER
Charlene Soraia Library 01717 3942651

LEEDS
Real Estate Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866

LEICESTER
Brother & Bones Soundhouse 07830 425555

LIVERPOOL
Ghostpoet Mojo 0844 549 9090
Michael Kiwanuka/The Staves Kazimier 0871 230 1094

LONDON
The Bled Dingwalls 020 7267 1577
The Chandeliers/Will & The People/ Appelican Healy Hoxton Cell 020 7739 1800
The Dunwells Bedford 020 8682 8940
Ed Sheeran/Graham Coxon/ Dry The River/Damon Albarn O2 Shepherds Bush Empire 0870 771 2000
The Hall Of Mirrors/The Hypnotic Eye The Lexington 020 7837 5387
International Mystikal Thiedos Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
Jill Jackson/Emma Jane Barfly 0870 907 0999
Kan Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
Mike Marlin/Richard O'Flynn MacBeth 020 7739 5095
Nicole Scherzinger HMV Hammersmith Apollo 0870 606 3400
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Vanna/Hundredth/The Greenery Underworld 020 7482 1932
Zodiac N Black Garage 020 7607 1818

MANCHESTER
Field Music Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Grouplove Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
Starlight Boulevard Academy 0161 832 1111

NEWCASTLE
Hyde & Beast/Symphonic Pictures Northumbria University
James Morrison O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
Sam Dickinson Cluny 0191 230 4474

NORWICH
Alestorm/Claim The Throne Waterfront 01603 632 717
Rizzle Kicks/Pepper/Random Impulse UEA 01603 505401
Rue Royale The Bicycle Shop 01603 625 777

OXFORD
Dog Is Dead O2 Academy 2 0870 477 2000

READING
Risen Solution/Torn Between/ The Jammin' Dodgers Face Bar 0118 956 8188

SHEFFIELD
Chris Treebeard & Sue Red House 0114 2727875
Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds/ Reverend & The Makers Motorpoint Arena 01142 565656

SOUTHAMPTON
Nick Lowe Brook 023 8055 5366

TUNBRIDGE WELLS
Scholars/The Pharoahs/Island Cassettes The Forum 0871 277 7101

Graham Coxon, O2 Shepherds Bush Empire, London

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MONDAY
February 20

Dog Is Dead, O2 Academy 3 Birmingham

BATH
Radio Banska Bell 01225 460426
BIRMINGHAM
Dog Is Dead/Boat To Row O2 Academy 3 0870 477 2000
Kylesa HMV Institute 0844 248 5037
Pulled Apart By Horses/The Computers HMV Institute (Library) 0844 248 5037
BRIGHTON
Glenn Jones Prince Albert 01273 730 499
Kurt Vile The Haunt 01273 770 847
Rams Pocket Radio Green Door Store 07894 267 053
The Wanted Centre 0870 900 9100
BRISTOL
Leonie Evans Canteen 0117 923 2017
NME AWARDS TOUR Two Door Cinema Club/Metronomy/Tribes/Azealia Banks O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
CARDIFF
Benjamin Francis Leftwich/Fossil Collective/Ren Harvieu The Globe 07738 983947
Rachel Sermanni Undertone 029 2022 8883
COVENTRY
Electric Youth Revolt Kasbah 024 7655 4473
EXETER
Crowns Cavern Club 01392 495 370
GLASGOW
Alcest/Les Discrets/Soror Dolorsa Stereo 0141 576 5018
Allo Darlin Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
The Big Pink/Mozart Parties/Sissy & The Blisters Garage 0141 332 1120
Charlene Soraia The Arches 0141 565 1000
General Fiasco The Arches 0141 565 1000
Lights King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
GUILDFORD
Ghostpoet University Of Surrey 01483 689 223
LEEDS
Field Music Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
Vanna/Hundredth The Well 0113 2440474
LEICESTER
The Dykeenies Musician 0116 251 0080
LONDON
Active Child St Giles In The Fields 020 7240 2532
Ajimal/Forestears Bull & Gate 020 7485 5358
Bleeding Knees Club Barfly 0870 907 0999
Boredom/Pettybone/Lich Windmill 020 8671 0700
Eddie Pillar/Arthur Baker Purple Turtle 020 7383 4976
The Idiot Bastard Band Monto Water Rats 020 7837 4412
Loney Dear Bush Hall 020 8222 6955
Murray James Enterprise 020 7485 2659
Peter Brotzmann/Paal Nilssen-Love Cafe Oto 0871 230 1094
Pete Williams The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Ron Pope Borderline 020 7734 5547
Rooftop Runners/Dolcetti Dublin Castle 020 7485 1773
NME AWARDS SHOW The Big Pink/Mozart Parties/Sissy & The Blisters Garage 020 7607 1818
These Reigning Days/Cry Baby/Jack O'Brien Social 020 7636 4992
MANCHESTER
The Deep Dark Woods The Castle 0161 237 9485
Django Django Deaf Institute 0161 330 4019
Masters In France Roadhouse 0161 228 1789
Michael Kiwanuka/The Staves Ruby Lounge 0161 834 1392
NEWCASTLE
Ben Howard Northumbria University
Decade Riverside 0191 261 4386
NEW BRIGHTON
Steve Hackett Floral Pavilion Theatre 0151 639 4360
NORWICH
Skrillex UEA 01603 505401
NOTTINGHAM
Marc Reeves/Alexa Hawksworth/Will Jeffery Maze 0115 947 5650
OXFORD
Reservoir Cats Bullingdon Arms 01865 244516
PLYMOUTH
Origin White Rabbit 01752 227522
PORTSMOUTH
The Wombats Guildhall 023 9282 4355
SHEFFIELD
Gauntlet Hair The Great Gatsby 0114 276 3939
Oddball/Bug Corporation 0114 276 0262
SOUTHAMPTON
My Extraordinary Joiners 023 8022 5612
YORK
The Underground Railroad/Honeytone Cody/Thee Piatcions Stereo 01904 612237

TUESDAY
February 21

BATH
Benjamin Francis Leftwich/Fossil Collective/Ren Harvieu Komedia 0845 293 8480
BIRMINGHAM
Pete Williams Glee Club 0870 241 5093
BRIGHTON
SCUM Green Door Store 07894 267 053
BRISTOL
Boredom/Bersicker Croft (Front Bar) 0117 987 4144
Dog Is Dead Thekla 08713 100000
Origin/Psycroptic/Leng Tche Croft (Main Room) 0117 987 4144
Under The Influence/My Favourite Runner Up Louisiana 0117 926 5978
CAMBRIDGE
Bomb Factory/Turbogeist Portland Arms 01223 357268
CARDIFF
Palomino Party/Inconsiderate Parking Gwdihw Cafe Bar 029 2039 7933
CHELMSFORD
Mercury Skies/Thunder Bunsen Hooga 01245 356 811
COVENTRY
The Wombats Warwick University 0871 230 1094
EDINBURGH
Allo Darlin Sneaky Pete's 0131 225 1757
GLASGOW
Annie Ross Oran Mor 0141 552 9224
Band Of Skulls The Arches 0141 565 1000
Baxter Dury The Arches 0141 565 1000
Casiokids Captain's Rest 0141 331 2722
Citizens Nice'n'Sleazy 0141 333 9637
Grouplove King Tut's Wah Wah Hut 0141 221 5279
Rodrigo Y Gabriela O2 Academy 0870 477 2000
HULL
Electric Youth Revolt Linnet & Lark 01482 441126
LEEDS
Kylesa/Circle Takes The Square The Well 0113 2440474
Lights Cockpit 0113 244 3446
The Men Brudenell Social Club 0113 243 5866
LEICESTER
Dead & Divine Lock 42
LIVERPOOL
Beth Jeans Houghton/Goodnight Lenin Eric's Club
Django Django/Evol Shipping Forecast 0151 709 6901
LONDON
Alexa Goddard Borderline 020 7734 5547
Arrows Of Love Garage 020 7607 1818
Dan Michaelson & The Coastguards Slaughtered Lamb 020 8682 4080
The Deep Dark Woods The Lexington 020 7837 5387
Gauntlet Hair Shacklewell Arms 020 7249 0810
Get People/Sylver Tongue/Young Dreams Madame Jojo's 020 7734 2473
NME AWARDS SHOW Kurt Vile / Sonic Boom/Real Estate KOKO 020 7388 3222
Octane OK Barfly 0870 907 0999
Satsuku/Kaya/Story Seller Underworld 020 7482 1932
Wet Nuns/Crushed Beaks/Drop Out Venus Old Blue Last 020 7613 2478
1877 Buffalo Bar 020 7359 6191
MANCHESTER
Joe Pug The Castle 0161 237 9485
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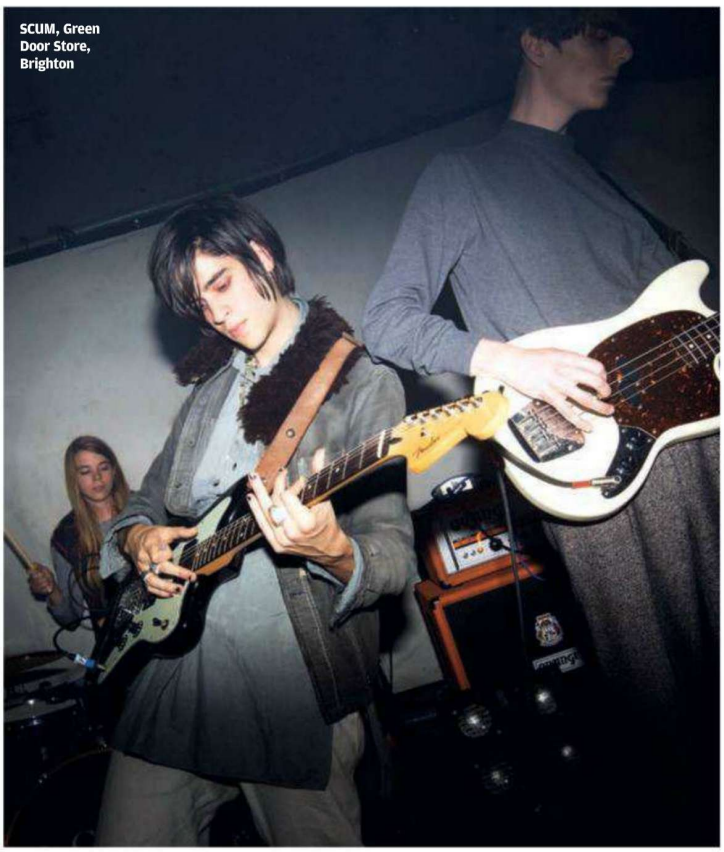
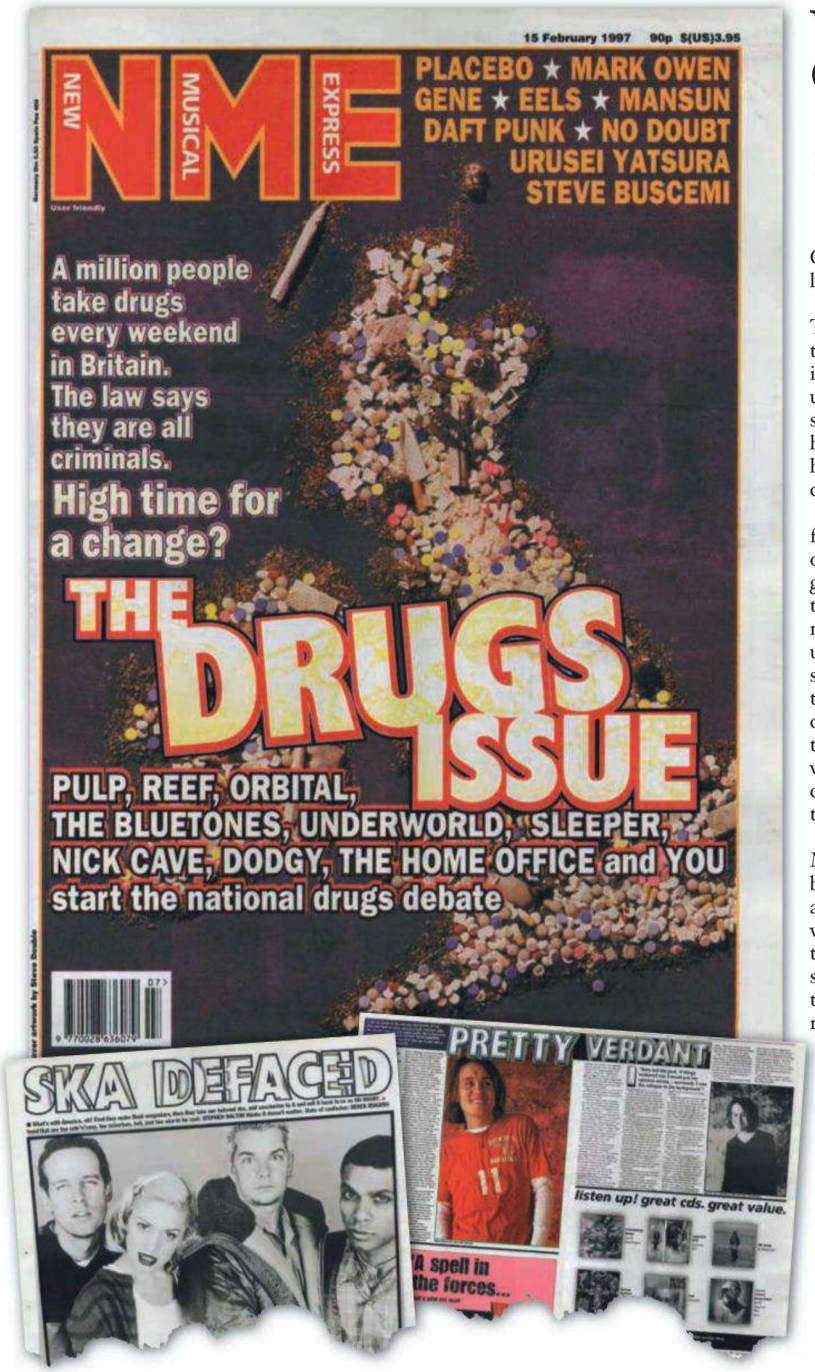
NOTTINGHAM
Ghostpoet/Alt-J Rescue Rooms 0115 958 8484
Ron Pope Bodega Social Club 08713 100000
OXFORD
Spector/David's Lyre Jericho Tavern 01865 311 775
PORTSMOUTH
Kaiser Chiefs/All The Young/Fixers Guildhall 023 9282 4355
PRESTON
Underground Railroad Mad Ferret 07919 896 636
SHEFFIELD
Toddla T University 0114 222 8777
YORK
Outbreak UK Stereo 01904 612237
Redlight The Duchess 01904 641 413


SCUM, Green Door Store, Brighton

THIS WEEK IN 1997

DRUGS GET TREATMENT, GWEN GOES POP, MANSUN ARRIVE



GWEN AT WORK

No Doubt have just arrived off the back of mega-smash 'Don't Speak'. "We've always been about just getting up there and having fun," Gwen Stefani notes."We always put on a show. Like, we played with Oasis, and this guy up there is just acting so stuck up! [Bassist] Tony goes, 'That's my idol,' ha ha! But it was weird for us to see that attitude; it's so different from us. We're more like, 'Hi! We like you and we want to have fun with you.'"

MARK HIS WORDS

Post-Take That, Robbie Williams has pressed on with the whole bad-lad thing and Gary has set off on his mission to be the next Elton John. Meanwhile, Mark Owen is readying an album of indie. "When I looked in the mirror I didn't just see a cute guy," he sniffs. "I always thought of myself as being creative. I was used to being in a band where every song sold a million copies, but now I just want to sell records 'cos they're good enough."

WE WANNA GET LOADED

Quite a furore has begun around one comment at the NME Awards just passed. The comment in question came from the mouth of Noel Gallagher and ran thus: "Taking drugs is like having a cup of tea in the morning."

MPs have jumped to respond, with Tory Edwina Currie's reaction being typical: "He is demonstrating the ill-effects of drugs – he is incapable of uttering sensible words, even when he's sober." Noel's reaction? "If saying that has helped to instigate an open and honest debate about drug abuse in this country, then I'm pleased."

And so follows this issue, with input from Jarvis Cocker ("The thing about drugs and music is that you're never going to be able to separate the two of them"), to Nick Cave ("There are so many people, Noel included, who are used as drug scapegoats") to Lucia, 18, student, who is not alone in suggesting that "everything should be legalised so it can be controlled better. Then NHS treatment would be better if anything went wrong, and people could go to court or whatever if they got something that's not good, if they were cheated."

Tom Sackville, Junior Home Office Minister, and "the UK's chief drug buster", does not agree: "If you legalise at this stage, what you would have would be many, many more people taking drugs, and a lot of them would still be resorting to crime to get money to buy drugs. There would be a huge rise in addiction, and the results would be disastrous."

The debate continues until... forever.

Also In The Issue That Week

- Placebo, Eels, Motörhead, Daft Punk and The Wedding Present are all caught live.
- Single Of The Week is Embrace's debut, 'All You Good Good People'. Writes Johnny Cigarettes: "They're trad without ever sounding self-conscious, or retro-stylised."
- Actor-turned-director Steve Buscemi is interviewed about his film 'Trees Lounge'.
- Gene's second album, 'Drawn To The Deep End', is awarded five out of 10.
- Mansun's debut, 'Attack Of The Grey Lantern', fares better, with eight out of 10.
- The next week page previews an *NME* cover featuring... Space.

NME

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THE LEGENDARY NME CROSSWORD

TAXING THE FINEST MINDS IN ROCK'N'ROLL FOR SIX DECADES

Compiled by Trevor Hungerford

Win!

A BAG OF NME SWAG

CLUES ACROSS

1+4A All this false celeb act lark is just more 'Fake Tales Of San Francisco' (5-7)
9 Beneath the surface it's a drag coming back having got a wave from Warpaint (8)
11 New Order spin-off at a Grand Prix circuit (6)
12 Audioslave song named after an Apache leader (7)
15+22D ELO voices wrong for new arrangement of a Primal Scream album (5-6-6)
17 '60s legend whose solo work includes the album 'The Madcap Laughs' (3-7)
21 Stereolab album comes through the open gates (4)
23 "*In violent times you shouldn't have to sell your soul*", Tears For Fears (5)
24 "*Into a place where _____ can bloom, into a room where it's nine in the afternoon*", Panic! At The Disco get ideas for a song (8)
27 Swiss group who entered 'The Race' with Dieter Meier and Boris Blank (5)
29 Rough Trade label band from Manchester who named themselves after an area of Glasgow (11)
32 Steps include a Beth Ditto release (1-1)
33 A rather personal question raised about The Kooks (2-2-2)
36 Coming out of Radio Nottingham is a singer who had hit in '60s with 'Runaround Sue' (4)
37 US singer-songwriter who was born Alecia Beth Moore (4)
38 (See 6 down)

CLUES DOWN

1 A rude tape of a Friendly Fires' performance (4-8)
2 Could somehow dud act be part of Cults' show? (8)
3 Group that had 1980 hit with 'Everybody's Got To Learn Sometime' (6)
5+8D Iggy Pop's very basic control over an album (3-5)
6+38A For a smarmy new look use an old Sutherland Brothers And Quiver number (4-2-4)
7 On the road with Ronnie ___ from The Faces (4)
8 (See 5 down)
10 Twopence to include indie rock band to play during 'The Silent Hours' (4)
14+13D The Band Of Skulls' new album should appeal to all tastes (5-4)
16 Musical from which came the 1981 Elaine Paige hit song 'Memory' (4)
18 US soul and gospel singer who was 'Tired Of Being Alone' (2-5)
20+19D Possibly a threat made by The Walkmen (3-3)
21 "*Dreams come bouncing in your head, ___ and simple every time*", The Lightning Seeds (4)
22 (See 15 across)
25 (See 31 down)
26 This was the finish of Black Rebel Motorcycle Club (4)
27 McAlmont & Butler were a bit of an eyesore (3)
28 Americans who went 'Tripping The Light Fantastic' (3)
30 "*But now those days are gone I'm not so self-assured*", 1965 (4)
31+25D At a stroke, the option of going under can be dispelled by Gaslight Anthem (4-2-4)
34 Nas album recorded in Miami (1-2)
35 Not exactly cutting-edge music from Blur (1-1-1)

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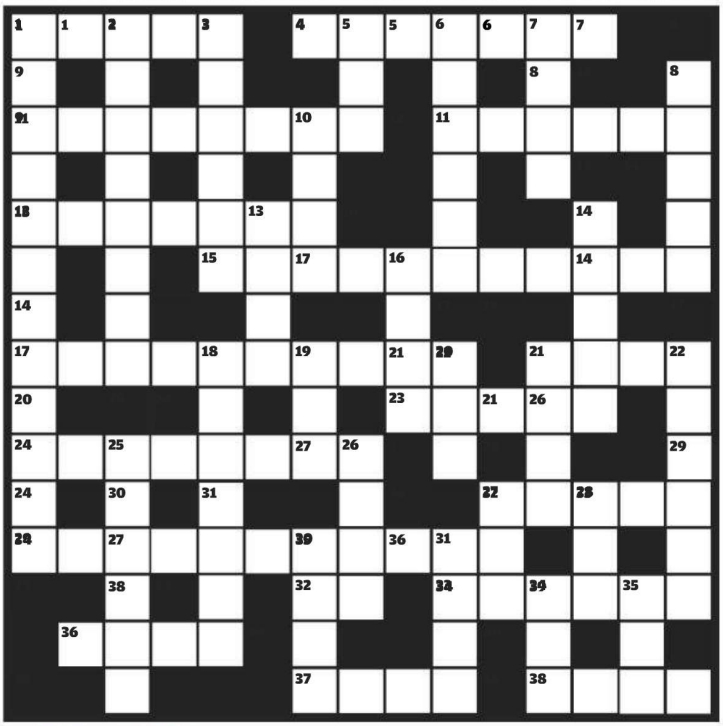


JANUARY 28 ANSWERS

ANSWERS ACROSS
1+31A A Flash Flood Of Colour, 9 Go Outside, 10 Wu Lyf, 11 Lady Soul, 13+15A Please Stand Up, 18 Toy, 19 Tiger, 21+15D Baker Street, 22 Yoko 1Ono, 24 Orson, 25 Stan, 27 Boon, 29+26D Tori Amos, 30 A-ha

ANSWERS DOWN
1 Angels, 2 Lloyd, 3 Satisfaction, 4 Failure, 5+32A Over Rising, 6 Down In Albion, 7 Filthy Dukes, 8 Alfie, 14 Lay, 16 Paranoid, 17+12A Stay With Me, 20 Goo, 23 Knoll, 25 Star, 27 BBC, 28 Far, 29 Ten

COLLECTORS' CORNER

BELLE & SEBASTIAN

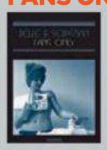
Call yourself a superfan? Here are the gems that no Belle & Sebastian obsessive should be without

TIGERMILK (ELECTRIC HONEY VINYL VERSION) (1996)

The band's debut album, recorded as part of a college course in Glasgow, was initially limited to just 1,000 vinyl copies. But after their popularity grew it was reissued on CD and vinyl by Jeepster Records in 1999. One of the original pressings is hard to come by these days.

Need To Know: The title is taken from an instrumental track which did not finish up on the eventual LP, but was performed at many of their early live shows.

FANS ONLY (2003)



DVD which chronicles the band's six-year spell with Jeepster Records, which ended when they signed to Rough Trade. Features videos, live performances, interviews, TV appearances and documentary footage from a time when the band were notoriously publicity shy, rarely giving interviews to print media and remaining something of a mystery.

Need To Know: The cover features Marisa Privitera, who became singer Stuart Murdoch's wife in 2007.

IF YOU'RE FEELING SINISTER: LIVE AT THE BARBICAN (2005)

Murdoch and co had often stated their unhappiness with how the production on their classic second album sounded. So as part of the ATP's Don't Look Back series of shows, they performed it in London complete with an additional string section.

Need To Know: The proceeds from the sales of this recording went towards helping victims of that year's earthquake in Kashmir, Pakistan and northern India.

GOD HELP THE GIRL – GOD HELP THE GIRL (2009)

The idea of writing songs about the lives of women and getting girls to sing them came to Stuart Murdoch in 2004. He devoted more time to the project during his band's hefty hiatus between 2006 and 2010, with an album coming out in 2009. It featured two songs recorded by B&S – 'Act Of The Apostle' and 'Funny Little Frog'.

Need To Know: Among those who have taken part are members of Smoosh and Those Dancing Days.

WORDS: ALAN WOODHOUSE

FANMAIL

YOU GET IN TOUCH, WE RESPOND, THINGS GET OUT OF HAND

Edited by Barry Nicolson

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The Big Issue

What everyone's talking about this week

Win! THE LETTER OF THE WEEK WINS £50 TO SPEND AT zavvi.com

THE CHIEF IS NOT FOR TURNING

From: Michael
To: *NME*

It's mental how the *Daily Mail*'s interview with Noel Gallagher panned out, and I'm not surprised one bit that he took to his own blog to retaliate about what they wrote and make clear what his point was about Thatcher. Anyone who's a fan of the man's music knows his views on the Tory party, which is why this article was so laughable. Noel has always been one of the most upfront musicians there is, and he actually makes some really good points about his views on politics in the piece. It's just that they got lost. It made me wonder if the interviewer had ever actually listened to any of his songs or read any of his interviews before. It's a shame that this is what we've come to expect from our tabloid press in the UK, because the actual interview was really interesting when it wasn't sensationalised.

NME's response...

It's obvious that *someone* in the *Mail*'s office – perhaps in a fleeting moment between dreaming up new ways to demonise the unemployed or writing PHWOAR! captions underneath paparazzi pictures of *Hollyoaks* actresses – saw Noel's quote and simply couldn't help pulling it out of context. It's low, sure, but from that paper it's hardly surprising. As you say, however, the interview itself did raise some interesting points. Engagement with politics right now is so tokenistic – self-made memes and Facebook groups full of hipsters boasting about organising street parties on the day Thatcher dies – that I can understand why Noel might be nostalgic for a time when people took this stuff seriously. It used to be the place of art to address the ills of society, but now there's this self-fulfilling fallacy that musicians shouldn't talk politics because they're 'only musicians'. Which is just rank cowardice. Put it this way: if Scotland leaves the UK, England will become a perpetual Tory fiefdom, and ironic tweets won't make the slightest bit of difference – BN

THE RIGHT DIRECTION...

From: James
To: *NME*

I've just voted in the NME Awards and I've gotta say I'm totally rooting for Kasabian! The guys released their best album yet last year and they are justifiably the biggest band Britain has produced since Oasis – just like they said they would be all those years ago. Fair play to them, they deserve to be big winners, and I also can't wait to see them perform on the night. Roll on the Awards.

From: *NME*
To: James

Yes! It's that time of year when I put my glad rags on, get my annual haircut and prepare to siphon all the leftover wine from Muse's table before the cleanup crew gets there: it's the NME Awards! Looking at the nominations, it's shaping up to be the Monkeys' year, although I dearly hope Pulp walk away with Best Live Band – my happiest memory of 2011 was watching an en masse mud-wrestling circle form to the strains of 'Common People' at T In The Park. Obviously though, it's not the winning but the drinking-your-own-bodyweight-in-booze that counts (not to mention all the bizarre shenanigans that go on during and after the ceremony). Though, saying that, it would appear that you can't please everyone... – BN

...THE WRONG DIRECTION

From: Angry Directioner
To: *NME*

How can you have an award called Worst Band and Worst Album? Can't you imagine how humiliating it must be for an artist or a band to enter the stage for worst something award? It's a horrible thing to have in an award show! I don't know a lot about this award thing. But I know that One Direction don't belong in any of those categories! It's OK for us Directioners that you don't like the music they make. And I'm sure it's OK for the Beliebers as well. But there is no need for you to give them the award for Worst Band! We don't make up an award show and give all the music you like bad awards? (*I wish you would, it might the Brits more watchable – BN*) I think you should remove those awards from the show. They are totally unnecessary!

From: Jodie Windsor
To: *NME*

One Direction are amazing and have thousands of fans and have been nominated for a Brit Award, why are they in the Worst Band and Worst Album section? And why do you have those categories anyway? To crush people's hopes and dreams? To have a laugh at people trying to have fun, enjoy life and do what they love to do? You're pathetic.

From: *NME*
To: Angry Directioner; Jodie Windsor

As you've probably guessed, our spam filters were overwhelmed this week by a deluge of emails from angry 'Directioners', apparently hurt and confused by our decision to nominate their cherished pubescent fleshbots for Worst Band and Worst Album. Intrigued by their ability to do things other than weep violently outside hotels and sketch

DEAN CHALKLEY, ROGER SARGENT

hauntingly tragic placards begging for the love of teenage boys who hire teams of security guards to keep them away, I did some research into these so-called 'Directioners' and discovered that not only do they claim – rather creepily – to "know more about the boys than they know about themselves" but they also "hold Simon Cowell responsible for creating One Direction, and originally called him 'Uncle Simon'. Then Simon tweeted that 'uncle' sounded too old and that he'd rather 'buncle', which is a mix of uncle and brother." I mean, that's just back-to-front, top-to-bottom wrongness, isn't it? I think I actually feel dumber simply for knowing it – BN

TOO MUCH MONKEY BUSINESS?

From: Alex Bentley
To: *NME*

Last night, Arctic Monkeys streamed 'their' Paris gig live around the world. There was one problem – it was overshadowed by Miles Kane's presence. I adore Miles, but should Jamie, Nick and Matt be outcast from their own gig because their frontman has a side project? Yesterday, Alex and Miles came out and performed a Last Shadow Puppets song,

STALKER

From: Heather
To: *NME*

"At The Maccabees's DJ set at Propaganda, Birmingham, I got a picture with the beaut Felix – and swigged his beer!"

which was an anti-climax to yet another superb Miles Kane gig. It was odd to see the frontman of the band you've paid to watch perform without the rest of the band. Of course, frontman fans would love this, but it was uncomfortable to see. Then, Miles returned for a further two songs in the set: 'Little Illusion Machine', where the vocals are solely Mr Kane, and '505' on which he plays guitar. The cameras were all over Miles and Alex. Matt, Nick and Jamie? Not at all. Also, when Richard Hawley came out to play the new track AM have released, he got a lot of attention, but the band didn't. It didn't seem like the Arctic Monkeys were there. It was Alex Turner and friends. How long will these sort of gigs last for? I expect if the better three of the band watch that back, it won't for be long.

From: *NME*
To: Alex Bentley

I didn't watch the stream, Alex, but by coincidence I was at the gig itself, and I can assure you, no-one else who saw the Shadow Puppets' brief reunion saw it as an anti-climax. It's not often the Monkeys get to play venues as intimate as the Olympia these days, so why not make a night of it by inviting their mates onstage? Also, 'the better three of the band'? Matt, Nick and Jamie all bring something to the table, no question. It's just that what Alex Turner brings to the table is, y'know, the songs. Did he pick on you at school or something?! – BN

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Web Slinging

The highlight of this week's NME.COM blogs

NME AWARDS 2012 – WHO SHOULD WIN BEST NEW BAND?

It's time to look at some of the NME Awards 2012 categories in more depth. Let's start with one of the most contested of the year, Best New Band (supported by Boxfresh), an award previously picked up by rising stars Hurts (2011), Bombay Bicycle Club (2010) and MGMT (2009). As ever, there are five contenders, and five pretty different offerings. A recap:

FOSTER THE PEOPLE
The LA threesome might be a bit clean cut and polished, but there's no denying that the likes of 'Pumped Up Kicks' had festival punters in their pockets like few others last summer.

LANA DEL REY
You'll be firmly on one side of the fence or the other on this one by now. Our recent online infographic telling her rise recaps the story so far.

TRIBES
If we were betting men, we'd put a good couple of quid on these boys scooping the prize.

THE VACCINES
Then again, we'd probably save at least £2 to put on this lot.

WU LYF
If the award was given to the band with the most *NME* office airplay, this would be a dead cert.

So, who deserves the 2012 Best New Band?

Read Tim Chester's article in full at NME.COM/blogs

Best of the responses...

WU LYF, by such an absolutely ludicrous margin. There's basically no point in asking though, since The Vaccines will win.
Ali Welford

Anyone but Lana Del Rey.
Barney Hunter

It's gotta be WU LYF. It just has to!
Emmett Cruddas

Definitely WU LYF. Only band there with a shred of originality.
Sam Commander

I'd quite like WU LYF to get it but I'm sure The Vaccines will.
Ingrid Allan

WU LYF! Hands down... =D
Chisom Okoye

EVERYBODY LOVES REY?

From: Jonathan Packham
To: *NME*

All this hype surrounding a certain Del Rey has got me puzzled. Is this the first buzzed-about pop artist to actually deliver on their much-hyped debut – or in this case sophomore – record? On the surface, it seems yes. Eight out of 10 in *NME*, despite all the backlash from preppy hipster blog sites and those who see themselves as painfully above her? I'm glad *NME* is standing up for pop music in the age where people would rather listen to twee-folk numbers or futile dubsteppery. Though the album is well produced and I agree to a certain degree with *NME*'s review, I'm left with a bad taste in the mouth. Whining and screeching about "lost love" and "being a bad girl" just seems unnecessary after a good 50 minutes. Yes she's pretty and yes, she's got a past shrouded in mystery, but it's the songs that matter, and I for one feel let down by some of the album. The big songs are there but there's a little too much filler – even if one or two bangers will set every tween girl's heart on fire. I do, however, hope that Lana becomes 'lamestream', so the blogs can shut up about her and let Miss Del Rey carry on doing what she does best – making bloody good pop singles.

From: *NME*
To: Jonathan Packham

So, er... you liked it? Didn't like it? Still on the fence? Personally, my expectations were tempered by 'Video Games' – I knew it was mathematically impossible that there would be another song on the album as good as that one – and so, in the end, I was pleasantly surprised by how the album turned out. I do wonder if she's cut out for all the scrutiny she's under, though: the internet giveth and the internet taketh away, and right now it seems determined to do the latter – BN

AND FINALLY...

From: Martin Langhorn
To: *NME*

As well as being Prince's son, I'm sure the drummer from Howler is also AC Slater from hit '90s show *Saved By The Bell*.

From: *NME*
To: Martin Langhorn

Martin, ask yourself: if you could grow a jheri mullet that spectacular, would it ever leave your head? – BN

STALKER

From: Ali Williams
To: *NME*

"Here's me with my fave music star Alex Turner before Arctic Monkeys' gig in Liverpool"

DOES ROCK'N'ROLL KILL BRAINCELLS?

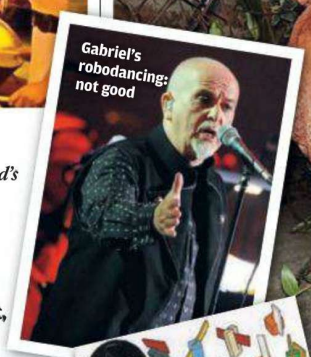
TESTING MUSICIANS' MEMORIES AFTER A LIFETIME OF ABUSE

This Week

JOE GODDARD

HOT CHIP, THE 2 BEARS

Steel Harmony: seriously heavy metal



Gabriel's robodancing: not good

QUESTION 1

Which song beat 'Ready For The Floor' to the Grammy for Best Dance Recording in 2008?

"Shit, was it Daft Punk? I think it was a Daft Punk record. I'll go for 'Harder, Better, Faster, Stronger'."

Correct. Did that piss you off?

"It would've been nice to have a Grammy, but I've got a runner-up medal."

QUESTION 2

What was the name of the steel band you had onstage with you when you played Glastonbury 2010?

"They're called Steel Harmony. They're great, they're actually on our new album as well. They once did a steel band version of 'Transmission' by Joy Division on a float going through Manchester as an art piece."

Correct

QUESTION 3

Which line of Vampire Weekend's 'Cape Cod Kwassa Kwassa' did Peter Gabriel change in his joint cover version with Hot Chip?

"He sang 'so strange speaking your own name'. He was fantastic, we sat and had soup with him at lunchtime."

Half a point. He sang "it feels so unnatural to sing your own name"

QUESTION 4

How many separate shapes being pierced by small sticks appear on the cover of 'The Warning' (right)?

"I've no idea. Maybe 37?"

Wrong. 34

QUESTION 5

In Tim Burton's 1989 Batman movie, which character utters the line "You're my number one guy", the influence for the line in 'Ready For The Floor'?

"I think two people say it, because Jack Palance's character says it to Jack Nicholson [The Joker] and Jack Nicholson says it to somebody else later. Just before The Joker kills Jack Palance's character."

Correct

QUESTION 6

Which singer were you rumoured to have written 'Ready For The Floor' for?

"Kylie (right). Her management got in touch with us and said, 'Can you do a couple of days' writing for Kylie's album?' in the way they ask loads of people. We never got round to it but the rumour came out anyway. Later we claimed Kylie wrote a track for our album, and people believed us."

Correct

QUESTION 7

What's the name of the fake breakfast show in the video for The 2 Bears' 'Bear Hug'?

"Is it called *Sunrise*? We were down at Fatboy Slim's house in Brighton. He's got this decking outside, it's right by the sea so we thought it was perfect for one of those morning TV programmes."

Correct

Joe and Raf turn a late night into an early morning

QUESTION 8

Complete this Hot Chip lyric: "I'm looking for a home for my mechanical being..."

"'...*I'm looking for the mechanical music museum*', from 'The Warning'. There are a couple of mechanical music museums around the country in a couple of different places. I think Alexis [Taylor] visited one."

Correct

QUESTION 9

Complete this lyric from The 2 Bears' 'Church': "I love your pretty face and your tough determination..."

"'...*I love your body too, let's mate and make a nation*'. That's Raf's [Rundell, the other Bear] words, I think he was just randy. I think that was a big part of why he and his girlfriend ended up getting married."

Correct

QUESTION 10

To three decimal places, what is the square root of the sum of 'Over And Over''s highest UK chart positions on each of its releases? Show your working.

"The second chart position I think was 26 but I don't know what the first one was. I have no idea."

Wrong. 27 and 32 equals 59, of which the square root is 7.681

Total Score

7.5/10

"This was not the kind of questioning that I would ever be expected to know the answer to for any kind of job or any practical purpose"

Go to NME.COM/blogs for the full Braincells hall of fame (and shame)

PHOTOS: ED MILES, GETTY WORDS: MARK BEAUMONT

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